An insight into Hindu Philosophy - Life and Beyond

Satya Prakash Tiwari

Readworthy

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Hindu Philosophy :- Life and Beyond

About the Author

Dr. Satya Prakash Tiwari, a Ph.D. in Genetics from Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, is a well-known agricultural scientist. Dr. Tiwari has served in various managerial capacities, including Project Coordinator, Directorate of Oilseeds Research, Hyderabad; Director, National Research Centre for Soybean, Indore; Assistant Director General (Seed), ICAR HQs; Director, National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad; and Deputy Director General (Education), ICAR HQs, New Delhi.

He was one of the team members who arduously and successfully promoted soybean to make the crop a significant pillar of yellow revolution. Soybean continues to make significant contribution towards agrarian economy and farm-prosperity. As a senior manager in ICAR, he provided customized and enabling infrastructure and policy support to agricultural research and education in the country. He conceived, got realized and operationalized several mega-projects.

Dr. Tiwari has travelled widely. He ardently and arduously represented and at times negotiated for the country in international forums. Dr. Tiwari had an early exposure to religious and philosophical studies. The present book is one of the results of his continuing pursuit of knowledge and wisdom as related to nature and philosophy.

An insight into Hindu Philosophy - Life and Beyond

Satya Prakash Tiwari
A Continuing Student of Nature and Philosophy

Readworthy
New Delhi

Revised Version of "Life and Beyond"

Disclaimer from the author: All religions/beliefs and schools of philosophy are equally respected and statement of any kind does not endorse or prefer one over the other. The beliefs, thoughts, convictions, suitability, benefits, etc. expressed are all personal to me. Any narration, belief, indication, conclusion, method or similar statement should not be construed as recommendations. Those may and would not suit to all or even anybody in some case. These are not to be taken as a panacea. Nothing is promised. The reader may or may not follow what is stated; he or she may do so only by using his or her own personal discretion and at his or her own responsibility.

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I never claim to be a philosopher. I cannot, as I am not. I am only a student of philosophy. Still, considering whatsoever little I could do, my wife, Mrs. Pushpa Tiwari, has enough goodness to flay and defy the relationship stated by Socrates[1] to exist between such endeavours and wife. I shall remain ever grateful to God for providing me this alliance in her form.

Satya Prakash Tiwari

Date : 9 Sep, 2008

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1 "My advice to you is to get married. If you find a good wife, you'll be happy; if not, you'll become a philosopher." - Socrates.

Key to Transliteration

Vowels and Diphthongs

अ	a	उ	u	ए	e
आ	ā	ऊ	ū	ऐ	ai
इ	i	ऋ	ṛ	ओ	o
ई	ī	ॠ	ṝ	ऑ	ô
		ऌ	ḷ	औ	au

Consonants

Gutturals		Palatals		Cerebrals		Dentals	
क	ka	च	ca	ट	ṭa	त	ta
ख	kha	छ	cha	ठ	ṭha	थ	tha
ग	ga	ज	ja	ड	ḍa	द	da
घ	gha	झ	jha	ड़	ṛa	ध	dha
ङ	ṅa	ञ	ña	ढ	ḍha	न	na
				ढ़	ṛha		
				ण	ṇa		

Labials		Semivowels		Sibilants		Aspirate	
प	pa	य	ya	श	śa	ह	ha
फ	pha	र	ra	ष	ṣa		
ब	ba	ल	la	स	sa		
भ	bha	व	va				
म	ma						

Conjunct Characters

क्ष	kṣa	ज्ञ	jña	and others similarly

Anusvāra		Anunāsika		Visarga		Avagraha	
ं	ṃ	ँ	ṅ, m̐	ः	ḥ	ऽ	' (apostrophe)

Preface and the Premise

For a humble person like me, whose life and experiences could probably be summarised on the back of an ordinary-sized postal stamp, nothing described hereunder could probably be path breaking. I have learnt from the experiences and exposures undergone by me and also from those happening to persons around me.

I was born on 14th November, 1947 as a Hindu and labelled a '*Brahmin*' by birth which I, just and often, attempted to prove true. The word labelling has been used by me because, proselytization apart, predominantly there is no system of allowing the human beings to be without a religion till they mature and then choose a religion. Moreover, it is not by birth that one becomes a knowledge-seeking, knowledge-possessing and wise person. One has to prove the status by striving to obtain knowledge and wisdom. It is by one's deeds that one becomes so. That is why, a learned and wise person has to have two births and is, thereafter, called the 'twice-born' or 'dvij.'[2] The biological birth is to be followed by spiritual birth.

Like most of the '*Kānyakubja Brāhmins*' of Madhya Pradesh, our family also had migrated from *Unnāv* (*Kutmauā Madārpur*) in United Province. In view of easy living and low cost of land in Madhya Pradesh, we migrated in the end of the nineteenth century to a place called '*Garhā*,' which is now a part of Jabalpur. Later in the year 1913, my great grandfather, Pandit Jia Lal Tiwari, who also served in agriculture department of the Central Province, bought a major portion[3] of the village 'Singod' near Panāgar, from Shri Beohār Raghubir Singh of Jabalpur. I had many occasions for meeting his son Shri Beohār Rājendra Singh

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2 "*Dvij*" by its meaning may not be associated with the caste of a person.

3 10/16; दस आना पट्टी ।

ji. My great grandfather died in the year 1925. His headstone[4] still lays at the bank of big tank of Panāgar, now almost a suburb of Jabalpur.

I had a great treatment of misfortune during my adolescence. We had almost every thing in our suburban dwelling, including a sizeable agriculture land, a Morris Cowley car, two motorcycles and a small bicycle for me, which was an imported one. But, as fate will have it, my grandfather and his colleagues had opened a bank probably during 1926-27, which became sick by 1935-36 consequent upon which a part of our *'malgujari'* was seized. The bank totally failed in forties. It was then sarcastically called 'the lame bank.'[5] We lost almost everything. One thing, nevertheless, stayed on; there was penury but no social rejection and we continued to be respected as before. This was a great solace.

The pecuniary crisis, however, kept on deepening. I remember to have eaten literally bread and pulse[6] for quite some time in middle fifties. As a fall-out, a cousin of my grandfather, Kesari Kakkāji as we used to call him, could not get needed treatment for his asthma and one day he asked me for his gun, on the pretext of cleaning it, and shot himself dead. We recovered partially later and had a reasonable living but those good old days, gone with the wind[7], never returned. For my young mind, it was all very shaking. It, however, gave me a tolerance for all time to come and even today some loss of money/property (I had my share of bad luck and deceit by near ones as well), a stroke of ill fate and vicissitudes do not matter much to me.

Owing to propinquity of Unnav with Lucknow, my elders, especially my grandfather Pandit Sheetala Charan Tiwari, a scholar of Benaras Hindu University, also had a good command over 'Urdu' language. During my childhood, my grandfather had

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4 The word is used in lieu of 'tombstone' that probably cannot be used for Hindus.

5 लंगडी बैंक

6 दाल—रोटी

7 After David Oliver Selznick

appointed an 'Urdu' teacher for me. I studied preliminary 'Urdu' tutors (*'qaaidā' 'awwal', 'doyam', 'soyam'* i.e. tutor the first, second and third), in which it was stated that *"Allāh khālik hai"* and *"Allāh rāqib hai"* (God is the creator; God is the protector). At that age itself, I shed my insularity and embarked learning and respecting other cultures and religions. The diverse exposures inculcated open-mindedness in me and saved me from being an uncompromising extremist. I experienced the same peace and solace in Saint Petro and Basilica when I visited Rome, Italy, as I had experienced in Somnath Temple, Veraval, India.

Besides my usual course in Sanskrit in middle school, I was induced to learn Sanskrit by a tutor. I also took examinations in Sanskrit language organised by the All India Sanskrit Language Examination Board, Surat[8].

Several exposures related to the religion and philosophy were undergone by me. To start with, we had some religious books in our home. As a young boy, I would steal into a corner with fascinating red, maroon and saffron hard-bound volumes of these religious books and peruse them for yielding their meaning but these, being full of terse and often cryptic statements, largely eluded me. It took its own time to reach the intended meaning. Even today a new meaning seems to be emanated from these scriptures. I grew with the time. Ādi Sankarācarya's *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi, Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, Rāmacarit Mānas of* Tulsidas, *Valmīki Rāmāyana,* some main *Upaniṣads,* and books on Indian philosophy, in particular, were studied. I had a fascination for Kabir, whom I studied to an extent. I do not claim to have understood all these in totality.

I believe in what Vince Lombardi stated: "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to his commitment to excellence, regardless of his chosen field of endeavour." Sadly, there are social values attached to field of endeavours! I was labelled a 'fool' by one of my uncles when I did not

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8 अखिल भारतीय संस्कृत भाषा परीक्षा समिति, स्वाध्याय मंडल, सूरत

consummate my confirmed admission in the engineering college even though I had the grip on the subjects and had obtained distinction in mathematics and physics in my higher secondary. The decision to come to agriculture college for graduation was mainly due to the following reasons: (i) having obtained the national ICAR Merit Scholarship of Rs. 75 per month (it was not a small sum for me in the year 1965), as I topped the list, (ii) nearness of the agriculture college to my house, and (iii) the fact, as related to me during my childhood and adolescence, that my great grandfather was in agriculture department of the Central Province after having had his education in Nagpur College. I had never regretted for taking this decision. Eventually, I obtained a Ph.D. degree in genetics from the reputed Indian Agricultural Research Institute, popularly called as Pusa Institute, New Delhi. Eventually I served in the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the apex national agency for agricultural research and education in India, as (i) Project Coordinator, Directorate of Oilseeds Research, ICAR, (ii) Director, National Research Centre for Soybean, Indore, (iii) Assistant Director General (Seed) at ICAR Headquarter (twice/two terms), (iv) Director, National Academy of Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad, and (v) Deputy Director General (Education), ICAR Headquarters, New Delhi. To my great satisfaction, I have been one of the team who arduously and successfully promoted soybean as a new crop in India by comprehensively generating knowledge, technology and product to make soybean a significant pillar of yellow (oilseed) revolution. The crop continues to make significant contribution towards agrarian economy and farm-prosperity. Again as a team-member, I have successfully promoted 'rabi'-summer groundnut cultivation, as a new approach towards increased productivity/production. As Director, NAARM, situated at Hyderabad, I contributed towards the learning and capacity building of the Indian National Agricultural Research System (NARS) in terms of development and management of human resource, information

and communication management, related research and policy support in regard to management of agricultural research, and education. Being in ICAR H.Q. as ADG (Seed), DDG (Education) and DDG (Crop Science), I provided customized and enabling infra-structural and policy support to agricultural research and education both in macro-management and schematic modes and facilitated capacity building of NARS including that through overall strengthening of about 45 agricultural universities in the country. I had the consummated opportunities to travel widely both within the country and abroad with a score of foreign visits to countries like USA, UK, Switzerland, Italy (Rome), Spain, China (including Hong Kong), Brazil, South Africa, Korea, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and several others such as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. I ardently and arduously represented and at times negotiated for the country in international fora such as ITPGRFA, FAO and UPOV. I represented ICAR/India in the First Governing Body (GB) of the FAO's Seed Treaty (ITPGRFA) held in Madrid, Spain in 2006. The Standard MTA and several global policy decisions were adopted in the GB of the ITPGRFA. I represented ICAR at the Second and Third Asian UPOV Meeting at Beijing (in 2001) and Seoul (2002). I also represented ICAR in several other international fora and also in regional consortia/nets viz. SANPGR (South Asia Network for PGR), SAARC and IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Trilateral Initiative. While serving in the ICAR HQ, I could also get associated to contribute my mite in several policy and promotional aspects of agricultural research and development. I shall ever remain grateful to the ICAR for providing me an upright and honourable means of living that promoted right engagement, right action and positive thinking. The profession of agricultural R & D and related management is also approved by many scriptures especially *Vedānta*. It states in *Taitrīya Upaniṣad*

that one should multiply the grain/seed and that enhancing the grain/seed production is an aim worth pursuing.[9]

When I was passing through my preparatory phase in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, I came in association with Aāchārya Rajnish (1931-1990), the Osho to be, and was associated to some extent with "Yukrand" (acronym for "Yuvak Kranti Dal"). During my graduation, owing to the efforts of my teacher, I could study some works of Vivekananda, J. Krishnamurthy and others. I also had an exposure, especially when I was in Simla, to the western philosophy through books. Later, while in Gujarat, I attended several religious gatherings, particularly of those 'gurus' who preached and sang from the epics. I have studied and listened to the Sadhu Vaswanis, both of them. I attended discourses in *Rādha Svāmi Satsaṅga* and *Āśaram Āśram* and studied the related literature. I am not in a position to ascribe myself to any particular sect or branch. I am also unable to claim myself as a disciple of any one of the 'gurus'. In other words, my thirst for knowledge took me to several 'gurus'[10] and everybody is my teacher.

The narration that follows is an outcome and assemblage of these experiences and exposures along with some of my own analysis and synthesis. Some of these observations are self-realised and some of these are learnt from scriptures also. Since long, I maintained my personal succinct notes of those observations and learning that I should essentially know and try to practise as a child of the universe. I wish such synthesized notes could be available to me when I was young so that the exposure could help me in knowing the essentials and then I could go to the original scriptures and books to further and deeply understand the area of my interest. This book is to be taken as an extended form of those notes and to serve the purpose of exposure.

Regardless of their historical authenticity of occurrence, until and unless so stated, several allegories are narrated in the book

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9 अन्नं बहु कुर्वीत । तद् व्रतम् ॥ तैतरीयोपनिषद्, नवम अनुवाक् ॥

10 मधुलब्धो यथा भृंगः पुष्पात् पुष्पान्तरं व्रजेत ।
ज्ञानलुब्धस्तथा शिष्यो गुरोगुर्वन्तरं व्रजेत ॥ गुरुगीता ।

merely to drive home a point in a simple way. These allegories are to be taken only in this context. I have tried to maintain gender-neutrality in narration. Therefore, the frequent use of the words such as 'one' and 'one's' (instead of his or her) should be acceptable. At several places, I have thought it would be proper to cite verbatim from the original statement of scriptures in *devnāgari*, mostly as footnotes. This unusual bilingual nature of expression may be forgiven in view of the intent of exposure to the original text.

Any narration, belief, indication, apparent conclusion, method or apparent recommendations may and would not suit to all or even anybody in some case. The beliefs, convictions, suitability, benefits etc. expressed are all personal to me. These are not to be taken as a panacea. The reader may or may not follow what is stated; he or she may do so only using his or her own personal discretion and at his or her own responsibility. Nothing is promised.

It is stated by elders that one should not speak and express without having authority on the subject[11]. I have dared to express although I do not claim any authority. Something from within prompted me to do so. No originality or scholarship is claimed. It is only an attempt to put together the observations and realisations in order to understand what I understand and that which I understood will always remain a fraction of which I did not.

Satya Prakash Tiwari

Date: 9 Sep, 2008

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11 सिद्धांत-रहस्य । श्री पीताम्बरापीठ, संस्कृत परिषद्, वनखंडेश्वर । दतिया, म.प्र. ।

Contents

"This page is Intentionally Left Blank"

1

The Cryptic Nature of Scriptures

Most of the scriptures available in the country, and for that matter anywhere in the world, are as stated and revealed by great saints and *Ṛṣis* based on their own realisations. To express these realisations, they had to depend on probably the only course available i.e. a (any) language, mostly through the verbal system of teacher to taught (*guru-śiṣya parampara* including *śruti* which means that which is heard) and later through written scriptures also. In those days writing on tree barks/*bhojpatras*[12] was difficult and printing did not exist. To remember the content easily and to pass it on from one generation to another, it was only natural under the circumstances that the message should be succinct and desirably in the form of verse or verse-like prose. The ancient writers could not afford to diffuse the issue since they had to rely on memory and oral traditions than on printed books. This extreme conciseness led to brevity in expression by making the scriptures difficult to understand. Further, there were such realisations that language alone may not fully express. The sages and saints did not have limitation of realisation but the limitation of expression continued. What they realised was probably beyond the limit of expression and language.

We communicate to transmit and exchange informations and also to coordinate actions. Communication can be formal and

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12 The bark of Himalayan Birck, *Betula* Bhojpatras Lindl.=*Betula utilis* D. Don.

informal; the latter is also termed as grapevine. What is realized probably cannot be totally communicated both in verbal and non-verbal modes. Perception of the communicated information may also differ[13]. Use of language in communication has helped the mankind a lot but it has also led to the emergence of pragmatics. Words are not the things.[14] Verbalization has its own problems. Deficiency of verbalization would mean leaving things to be understood (differently!), whereas excess of it would result in long-windedness/wordy expression that would aim to impress and not to express. A balanced mean would result in a good compromise between content, methods used, import of content and verbalism. Several times, the content is only attempted to be conveyed but sadly it is not actually conveyed. Others understand it. Then they can say, "I could gather what you wanted to say but you have not said it."

The meaning of words one by one may lead to the meaning of sentences but may not lead to the intended deep meaning.[15] One, then, may fail to grasp the real importance of the sacred text. A common man, hence, cannot claim to have exactly understood what was intended in these scriptures.

The language and aphorisms of Indian scriptures are often terse, succinct and cryptic, sometimes to the point of obscurity. This is true of *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and most of all other scriptures. For understanding these, a teacher may be needed. A commentary or *bhāṣya* of the scriptures leads to clear understanding. That is why, Ādi Śankārācarya chose to write *Bhāṣya* on 11 *Upaniṣads* (some say it is 12 but the commentary on *Śvetasvatar Upaniṣad* is disputed) and other scriptures. *Upaniṣads*, *Brahm Sūtra* and *Bhagavad Gītā*--the three are collectively called as

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13 मुंडे मुंडे मतिर्भिन्ना .....।

14 Canter, Alfred J. 1965. Unitrol: The Healing Magic of the Mind. Parker Publi. Co., Inc., N.Y. pp. 1-192.

15 वाच्यार्थ, वाक्यार्थ एवं लक्ष्यार्थ/निहितार्थ

Prasthāna Trayi of *Vedānta*. Ādi Śankarācārya has written commentary or *bhāṣya* on all the three. Others to follow, for example Rāmānujacārya, further interpreted it and differed on certain points. Devout saints such as Goswami Tulsidas (1532-1623 A.D.) and others have really benefitted the common man by making the essence of religion and philosophy simple and interesting. Of late, the learned persons like those belonging to the Chinmay Mission and several others made it even more simple for a common man.

Difficulty arises in understanding the scriptural statements in the background of modern scientific knowledge. We have to separate what belongs to revelation from that which is the product of error or human interpretation. An affirmation of truth only is to be considered divine and all else vestigial. This is to be noted here that in the early times, the divine experiences and revelations were passed down from generation to generation by oral traditions which led to some original writings. Most of these original writings do not exist today. These constituted an intermediate stage between the oral traditions and the available definitive texts. Events and experiences were, then, presented from each individual narrator's point of view and were often laden with dialectic acrobatics. One source event and experience was, thus, described by several narrators. Multiplicity of these sources led to variations, and even contradictions and oppositions. When allowance is made for such human error, the revelations largely hold ground even in the light of modern scientific knowledge. Dr. Maurice Bucaille, while examining scriptures of three monotheistic religions viz. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, had concluded that core revelations were in agreement with science.[16]

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16 Maurice Bucaille, 1976. *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science* [La Bible, le Coran et la Science]. Seghers, Paris. Indian Edition (in English), 1995, Millat Book Centre, New Delhi. pp. 1-252.

Even scriptures and holy books have a limit to help in self-realisation. A saint put all the holy books in places of four legs of a cot, put a board on it and sat and slept over them. It was highly objected to by some people. To this he replied, "If somebody promises you to give something and does not do so, what do you do to him? I have given the same treatment to these books." Had it been studying the books alone, all students of *Vedānta* and others would have necessarily attained salvation. It is, however, not to undermine the importance of books for those who not only read but also study and follow them[17] to have self-realisation.

The corollary is that besides these limitations, a common man like me has his own limitation of both realisation and expression. Therefore, what is submitted here is in all humility.

Maurice Bucaille. 1983. *What is the Origin of Man?* Seghers, Paris. Indian Edition (in English), Millat Book Centre, New Delhi. pp. 1-219.

17 पाठन, मनन एवं धारण

2

Religion and Philosophy

Philosophy ('philos' + 'sophia' meaning the friendship or love of wisdom) is the pursuit of wisdom. It is a search for an in-depth understanding of not only values and reality, as some dictionaries put it, but also of real purpose and ultimate goal of life. Philosophy is both an intellectual pursuit and an attitude to the reality as a whole. It is an analysis of the concepts expressing fundamental beliefs. Philosophy of life is an overall vision or attitude towards life and the purpose of life. It is a resolute and persistent attempt to understand and appreciate the universe as a whole. Philosophy is the rational aspect of religion i.e. a rational enquiry into the nature of truth and reality.

Metaphysics is commonly known as a science of being and knowing. Prof. R. Carnap regards metaphysics as an expression of the general attitude of a person towards life. Arguments and polemics form an important part in a metaphysical discourse. At the beginning of the movement of logical positivism, several philosophers such as Schlick, Carnap and Ayer opined that metaphysics is pseudo-science and as such it had to be denounced completely. Sigmund Freud would regard metaphysics as schizophrenic verbalism! But critics have not spared philosophy from their uncharitable remarks, the most common one being that 'a philosopher searches for a black hat (or cat) in a dark room where it is not.'

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 A.D.), however, accepted the existence of metaphysics, if not as a science, yet still as natural

disposition. He stated that metaphysical entities had some practical interests and religious needs of man to fulfil. According to him, metaphysics is driven by an inner need of man, which consists in manipulating his thinking so that in the end a life of moral value and religious piety occurs.

The vocation of philosophy is embodied in 'know thyself.'[18] The oracle of Delphi also states, "Man! Know thyself." Philosophy seeks not only knowledge but wisdom as well.

Information, knowledge and wisdom are many a times, not so deftly and mistakenly, taken as a single bunch of attributes. Accumulated and appropriately segregated, information may lead to knowledge but wisdom is beyond this routine gathering of classified facts and figures. Jorge Beacon has already given an explosive dictum i.e. "knowledge is power." However, wisdom is higher than knowledge. Sandra Carey states, "Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life." John Naisbitt has said, "The world is drowning in information but starving for knowledge." Sometimes discriminative knowledge is (probably rightly) taken as being equivalent to wisdom. T.S. Eliot lamented:

"Where is the wisdom, we have lost in knowledge; Where is the knowledge, we have lost in information."

The emphasis by modern philosophers on reason and on the new method of discovery led to enquiries into the limit, nature and function of knowledge. This study of knowledge for ascertaining its nature and limit is called epistemology. Kant gave a special and prominent place to epistemology for which he is rightly known.

The philosopher starts from the world of facts or the created things and may reach the conclusion about the existence of God. On the other hand, theology, being the study of religion, takes

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18 आत्मानम् विद्धि

recourse to revelation. A theologian starts from revelation and deduces the world of objects from the revealed truths. In the long run, reason and revelation are not opposed. Faith is not opposed to reason, but is higher than reason. Reason and faith have to go together and must not be sundered.

Religion is understood to be the service and worship of God or the supernatural. It could be a personal set or an institutionalised system of faith, religious attitudes, beliefs and practices. What is thus borne, abided and accepted is religion[19].

Let us see what is generally meant by Hindu, Hinduism and Hindu Philosophy. The word "Hindu" was used by outsiders rather invaders. The term Hindu, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, had originally a territorial and not a creedal significance. It implied residence in a well-defined geographical area. The word 'Hindu' was most probably first used by Persians for the people who live around/beyond 'Sindhu'/'Indus' river. 'Indus' itself is derived from the Sanskrit word *'Sindhu.'* "Hindu" was also used to broadly refer to people of India, which, of late, is largely replaced by 'Indian'. As Dr. Radhakrishnan has observed: `The Hindu civilization is so called, since its original founders or earliest followers occupied the territory drained by the Sindhu (the Indus) river system corresponding to the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab. ... The people on the Indian side of the Sindhu were called Hindu by the Persian and the later western invaders[20]. That is the genesis of the word `Hindu'.

A 'Hindu" is one who follows "Hinduism.' A Hindu broadly adheres to the philosophies and scriptures of Hinduism. Hinduism is a set of religious, philosophical and cultural systems

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19 धारणात् इति धर्मः ।

धारणाद् धर्मम् इत्याहुः,धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।

यत् स्यादारणसंयुक्तं, स धर्म इति निश्चयः ॥ महाभारत ॥

20 .The Hindu View of Life by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. p.12.

that originated and is followed in India. There are over 920 million Hindus, making Hinduism the third largest religion in the world after Christianity and Islam. Of these, about 30 million belong to the Hindu diaspora abroad. Hinduism is not based on a single doctrine, a single founder or a single teacher. There is a wide diversity in the beliefs, practices and traditions encompassed by Hinduism.

Some scholars argue that the Hinduism is not a religion *per se* but rather a unification of a diverse set of traditions and practices, which was labeled as Hinduism. Nevertheless, Hinduism has certain common philosophical concepts, practices and cultural traditions. These common elements generally originate from the Vedic, *Upaniṣad* and Puranic scriptures and epics. There are several schools and sub-schools of philosophy, sects of religion etc. which a Hindu can follow.

Analysis has brought about that unlike other religions in the world, the Hindu religion does not claim any one prophet; it does not worship any one god; it does not subscribe to any one dogma; it does not believe in any one philosophic concept; it does not follow any one set of religious rites or performances; in fact, it does not appear to satisfy the narrow traditional features of any religion of creed.[21] In regard to the broad features of Hindu religion, it is worthwhile to highlight Bal Gangadhar Tilak's formulation of Hinduism's defining features viz., (i) acceptance of the *Vedas* with reverence, (ii) recognition of the fact that the means or ways to salvation are diverse, and (iii) the realization of the truth that the number of gods to be worshipped is large. According to Tilak, 'that indeed is the distinguishing feature of Hindu religion'.[22]

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21 Refer to the case of "Shastri Yagnapurushadji and others & Muldas Bhundardas Vaishya and another"; Date of Judgment: 14-01-1966; Citation: 1966 AIR 1119, 1966 SCR (3) 242.

22 Refer to the case of "Brahmchari Sidheswar Bhai and others Versus State of West Bengal"; Date of Judgment: 02-07-1995; Citation: 1995 AIR 2089, 1995 SCC (4) 646.

For most of the Indians, religion is *'dharma'*. The word *dharma* means 'nature' and as such religion may not be a true synonym of it. *Dharma* is of two types viz. temporary (*Naimittika Dharma*) and permanent (*Nitya Dharma*), the latter being of eternal nature as water is liquid by eternal nature but could take form of ice on cooling, temporarily till heating is there to bring it back to liquidity. The relationship of a *jīva* or essence of life with the Supreme or Absolute is eternal. This is the eternal nature (*Sanātana Dharma*) as it continues perpetually. It is universal as it is the natural *dharma* of the living entities. The relationship of body or mortal form, on the contrary, is not of eternal nature.

Religions appear to be different yet are the same at the core. Although theism is the basis of most of the religions, the variations do exist. Monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam seem to differ from polytheistic religions. Nevertheless, the basic elements of all the religions are the same. A religion may have three components viz. rituals, cultural and spiritual. Rituals including ceremonies relating to birth, marriage and death are important constituents of all faiths and religions. Culture springs from the way of life, the nature of which hinges a great deal on heritage and environment. The spiritual aspect is the same or at least similar in all and cannot be the cause of differences. There is scope for difference between religions and sects when the first two of these components viz. rituals and cultural components are considered. The third component, i.e. spiritual, is the same. This component also helps overcome the conflicts arising owing to the first two components.

All religions believe in the Supreme and teach morality, as well as principles of equality and reciprocity. Equality means that all the living beings are equal. Reciprocity means "Do unto others what you want others to do unto you."[23] All religions have the same approach of self-introspection and the same goal of self-

23 From Bible

realisation and attainment of immortal values. Emperor Akbar had attempted to have a fusion of such principles across the religions by promulgating *Deen-e-Elaahi*. Sufis also believe in the essence rather than in rituals. One of the youngest religions of the world, i.e. Sikhism, was founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the late 15th century. Though Guru Nanak Dev Ji belonged to a Hindu family, his association with other religious heads saw an amalgamation of principles of more than one religions.

There does not seem to be any strong reason to prefer one religion to and over the other. There is no system of allowing the human beings to grow and mature and then to choose a religion. Barring a fraction, and in most cases a proselytised fraction, that goes for change in the religion owing to several reasons which are not always spiritual in nature, the system becomes operative on a person from and due to his birth in a particular set of family and environment. Probably the best way to take it is as what the poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan states:

"Different paths are indicated. But I tell you, take (any) one path and keep going on it. You shall reach the destination."[24]

There have been social, religious and linguistic evolutions in the world. These have generally helped the mankind but it is a fact that, in some way, these have been the obstacles in building a universal order. Nations/countries and religions (if taken on face value) are the major causes of divide.

We attach more than deserved importance to expressions, language and words rather than to the essence. Languages may differ but may mean the same thing. An interesting incident will be worth citing here. Hutton[25] refers to the speed with which the Nagas (a north-eastern tribe of India) change language and how

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24 "अलग-अलग पथ बतलाते सब, पर मैं यह बतलाता हूँ,
राह पकड़ तू एक चला चल, पा जायेगा मधुशाला ।"

25 J.H. Hutton. 1931. Ethnographic notes by various hands. In *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. 1 India, Part III B. Govt. of India Press, Simla.

the latter splits into dialects not even mutually intelligible. There is an anecdote on this. Seven 'semas,' each coming from different villages, happened to meet by the roadside one evening. They asked one another what they had with them to eat with rice. Each mentioned a new thing viz. *atusheh, gwomishi, mugishi, amusa, akhetre* etc., but when they opened their respective bags, they all produced chillies! A word is not a thing. It is only a label. It may confuse. It may divide. If we go to the core, it is not different; it is the same.

It would not be wise to surmise, as some do, that religion is for common people, all and sundry, whereas the philosophy is for knowledgeable and wise persons. Every religion has an ingredient of philosophy. It is, in fact, religio-philosophical in nature. The basic elements and underlying values of all religions are the same and an extract of these could be philosophy.

In India, we have *darśana*, and philosophy is not a very correct synonym for it. Several Indian philosophers, including the modern ones, maintained that in India there is nothing like philosophy and what we have is beyond what the world calls as philosophy. The word, *darśana* means direct perception, contemplative vision, or spiritual revelation. It means having discerning/discriminating wisdom to reveal the ultimate principle, pattern and elements of the creation. But *darśana* is not a mere study or an understanding of these principles and elements. It has a purpose beyond that. The Indian *darśana* is distinct in having a goal, the goal of self-realisation and liberation. This very fact itself makes Indian *darśana* to go beyond the commonly understood meaning of philosophy.

What we analyse and synthesise by mind or intellect may largely tend to have a limitation of remaining confined to near-tangibles or tangible-intangibles. The philosophy as taken today in the world has all the dangers of being such an exercise of the intellect. If it is so, it will not lead to the coveted goal of understanding and salvation, rather it will make one feel so satisfied mentally that one may not feel any need to go beyond

and experience the truth and have a *darśana*. The aim of Indian philosophy is liberation or salvation in contrast to being a mere intellectual discipline pursued for its own sake.

Let us also see what is meant by *adhyātma*. *Adhyātma* is dwelling firmly in one's own self (*Gītā*, 8-3).[26] This self-dominance of the soul actually means dwelling firmly in God. One has to know the nature of one's true Self. One has to fathom the truth contained within oneself. Till the Self is understood, all activities and even achievements result in naught. All is in vain. On the contrary, nothing can disturb a person who has the knowledge of the Self. One, then, is infused with the sense of supremacy of his (true) Self that is nothing and not different from the Supreme.

Study of philosophy may or may not lead to self-realisation and liberation. A string of a music instrument can be played differently by two persons. One may create just noise and ennui while another person may create melody and enchantment. Actually, the music is in the heart of a person, and not in the instrument, which is manifested through the medium of the musical instrument and the tinkling and clinking of the strings. The greatest mistake is that we study philosophy simply to please our intellect.[27] True transcendental or discriminating knowledge borne out of self-realisation is not to be confused with mere intellectual or theoretical knowledge. We have all the dangers of becoming a resource person, a debater and a columnist on philosophy without having and doing it. It is like being such a critic of music who knows enough about it but is incapable of practising music, what to talk of creating music.

Spirituality, entering into a person through any path, creates its own space in one's life. Resonating with one's growing experiences, it creates its own deeper and true meaning heralding one through the path of life and beyond.

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26 .... स्वभावोऽध्यात्मुच्यते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 8-3 ॥

27 चित्तस्य लालनम् ।

3

The Universe and the Man

The universe has a plethora of bewildering space-time regions. In fact, there could be several universes, which could be collectively called as multiverse. Let us briefly look at some of the important facts available in order to make sense of what we see and have around us.

3.1. The Universe: The historical facts

The word 'universe' has been derived from the French word *univers*, which in turn has been derived from the Latin word *universum*. It means 'everything rolled into one; everything combined into one'. Universe can be defined as simply everything that exists, has existed and will exist. It has, however, to be remembered that even that which does not exist can influence which does finally exist.

The ancient beliefs about the universe and the earth had been revised only after undergoing a strenuous process of conviction arising from scientific studies. The earliest views of physical cosmology were given by the Greek philosophers viz. Aristarchus of Samos, Aristotle and Ptolemy. Several astronomical theories were given concerning the earth's position in the universe. Ptolemy held that the earth was the centre of the universe. This geocentric Ptolemaic system became the accepted theory as part of the religion of medieval Europe, especially in the Catholic Church. Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543 concluded that the earth was not the centre of the universe and that it rotated around the sun while spinning on its own axis. This heliocentric system proposed by Copernicus was

subsequently corroborated by Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei. Later, the Vatican, under Pope John Paul II announced in 1992 A.D. that the Catholic Church erred in condemning Galileo's work which proved that the work of Copernicus was valid, mainly that the planets circle the sun and not the earth. Karl Popper (1989), the eminent (scientific) philosopher, who analysed the difference between empiricism and rationalism, has stated:

"Erroneous beliefs have an astonishing power to survive for thousands of years, with or without the aid of any conspiracy."

Putting it simply, Kepler's laws of planetary motion stated that (i) the orbit of every planet is an ellipse, (ii) the planet travels faster while close to the sun and slows down when it is farther from the sun, and (iii) the larger orbits have longer periods and the speed of a planet in a larger orbit is lower than in a smaller orbit. Issac Newton published his *Principia Methematica* in 1687 wherein the 'law of universal gravitation' was brought about that explained the anomalies in the previous systems and gave a physical mechanism for Kepler's 'law of planetary motion.'

The universe, if the physical theories are correct, formed about 15 billion years back following the big bang[28]. The Big Bang Theory was proposed by the Belgian priest Georges-Henri Lemaître in 1927. He proposed the idea of a universe born at a single instant in the past—'a day without yesterday.' Fred Hoyle, in 1948, put forword an opposing 'Steady State' theory in which he states that the universe continually expanded but remained statistically unchanged as new matter is constantly created.

The Big Bang theory was subsequently corroborated by Edwin Hubble in 1929 and by Arno Penzias and Robert Woodrow Wilson in 1964. Hubble found that all the galaxies were moving away and racing apart from each other. If we put the clock backwards, there must have been a time when everything in the universe would have been at a single point from where it started moving apart. Later,

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28 Hawking, S.W 1988. *A brief history of time.* Bantam Press.

Arno Penzias and Robert Woodrow Wilson discovered cosmic microwave background radiation, a fact that supports the Big Bang theory and also a fact the Steady State theory cannot account for. These discoveries of Hubble, Penzias and Wilson pointed to the Big Bang, which became the widely accepted view of the origin of the universe. Ironically, Fred Hoyle, who was an opponent of the theory and believed in a Steady State of the universe, coined the term 'Big Bang' during a BBC radio broadcast in 1950.

At the beginning of the Big Bang, the initial state of the universe was a singularity or a single point (gravitational singularity or spacetime singularity). This was primordial condition of enormous density and temperature. The universe expanded from this state to the current state as if a fire ball erupted.

The lower limit to the age of the universe has also been determined with the aid of radioactive clocks (as is done on the earth using carbon14) on the basis of two elements (uranium and thorium) as observed in old stars that were present at the time of their formation[29]. The value obtained is 12.5 billion years with an error margin of plus or minus 3 billion years. It is generally agreed that the universe is 13.7±0.2 billion years old and at least 93 billion light years across. It is estimated that the 'observable universe' contains about 9 billion trillion stars that are organized in around 80 billion galaxies. The galaxies themselves form clusters and superclusters. Scientific evidences suggest that the universe has been goverened throughout its history by the same physical laws and forces viz. gravitation, electro-magnetism, the weak interaction and the strong interaction. Some speculations go beyond one universe and consider that this universe may be one of the many disconnected universes that are collectively denoted as 'the multiverse.' These parallel universes could possibly have different physical laws than our universe!

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29 Determination made using the Very Large Telescope (VLT) at Silla Observatory, Southern Atacama Desert, Chile, by the European Southern Observatory (ESO) system.

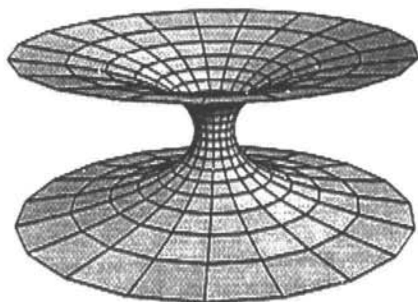
'Dark Matter' and 'Dark Energy' are suggested to cover about 96 per cent of the universe. Dark Matter is present everywhere. It is surmised that 'Dark Energy' is rapidly pushing apart our universe. More and more exoplanets, which revolve round the stars other than the sun, are being identified and studied which may also provide an answer to the question as to whether or not there could be an extra-terrestrial life.

Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, consists of about 200 billion stars including the sun. It is a fairly large spiral galaxy and it has three main components: a disk, including the solar system, a central bulge at the core, and an all-encompassing halo. Andromeda (M 31) is the nearest bright galaxy to the Milky Way. Andromeda shares many similarities to the Milky Way; both of them are spiral galaxies.

The theory of black holes, white holes and worm holes arose from the probable solutions to the equations of Einstein's general theory of relativity. The Schwarzschild's black hole was soon followed by Ludwig Flamm's white hole that is connected to the black hole entrance by a space-time conduit. The high gravity conditions of black hole do not allow even light to go out and matter can enter but cannot exit from it. The black hole 'entrance' and the white hole 'exit' could be in different parts of the same universe or in different universes in the multiverse! Thus, we have a theoretical possibility of an amazing nature, the possibility of travelling at trans-light speed between two different points in space-time.[30]

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30 Morris, Michael S., Kip S. Thorne and Uri Yurtserver, 1988. Wormholes, Time Macjines, and the Weak Energy Condition. Phys. Rev. Letters, 61: 1446-1449.
Morris, Michael S. and Kip S. Thorne. 1988. Wormholes in space-time and their use for interstellar travel: A tool for teaching general relativity. Am. J. Phys. 56(5): 395-412.



The wormhole could be a tunnel connecting two openings in different regions of space-time and could be used for interstellar travel.

Almost every major religion has an end of the universe prediction. Some have cycles of creation and destruction. The theological study of the ultimate fate of the universe and the mankind is known as eschatology.

3.2. Origin of life on earth

Our planet, earth, aggregated under the influence of gravity and subsequent meteor impacts some 4.5 to 4.7 billion years ago. The earth's crust became stable by about 3.9 billion years ago. Life on earth appeared around 3.5 to 3.7 billion years ago. Later, when massive forms of life including dinosaurs became extinct, remote ancestors of the human being evolved.[31] Stone tools emerged about 2 million years ago from now but it took about more than a million years for the mankind to embark upon any substantial invention. The chronology of inventions, as given in the table below, is interesting. It is to be noted that the pace of invention increased tremendously only late. The interval between major inventions is progressively diminishing.[32]

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31 Fortey, R. 1997. *Life: An Authorised Biography.* Flamingo.

32 Sheehy, John E 1997. The universe, the evolution of the perverse, and a rice problem. pp. 1-18. (Very interesting article by this IRRI-scientist with a rather unusual way of looking at things).

The chronology of invention (years ago)	
Simple stone tools	2,000,000
Bifaced tools	750,000
Fire	500,000
Burials	100,000
Polished stone tools	50,000
Cave paintings	30,000
Metal (copper) work	7,000
The wheel	5,000
Iron tools	3,000
Writing	3,000
Science	2,500
Telescope	400
Electric light	120
Gasoline engine	114
Airplane	96
Transistor	50

Origin of life remained primarily a theological issue till 17th century A.D. Aristotle believed that small creatures such as maggots, worms, fleas and even mice could arise from non-living material i.e. from the moist 'Mother Earth' or from once living and now dead matters. The experiments of Redi, Pasteur and others refuted this theory. Italian physician Francesco Redi (1626-1697) demonstrated in 1668 that maggots appeared in meat only after flies had deposited their eggs on it. Thus, he proved that maggots do not spontaneously generate on their own, as previously believed. In the later part of the 19th century, Thomas Huxley, John Tyndall and Leo Errera gave the possibility of a gradual chemical origin of life.

The theory that life can arise spontaneously from non-living molecules under proper conditions is called 'abiogenesis.' The putative chemical precursors of life on earth have been theorised to have existed an estimated 3.5 billion years ago.

In 1920s and 1930s, Alexander I. Oparin in Russia and John B.S. Haldane in Britain independently developed theories suggesting how conditions on the early earth may have been conducive to the chemical evolution of life. They postulated a primitive reducing atmosphere containing organics in a 'primeval/primordial soup,' out of which life eventually emerged in its most elementary form. The Stanley Miller-Harold Urey Experiment at the University of Chicago in 1953 further supported the theory. Miller put methane, ammonia, hydrogen gas and water vapour in a sealed glass apparatus and kept it boiling while a spark-discharge was made to strike the gases in the flask. This resulted in the formation of several amino acids. Although certain questions were raised on several grounds like molecular chirality (right and left-handed mirror-image forms) etc., the Miller-Urey experiment is cited as a milestone to explain origin of life.

The possible role played by clay and a semi-dry, lagoon like environment has been stressed notably by Cairns-Smith and Miller. The possibility of a primordial 'RNA world' was prominently brought about by the Harvard biologist, Walter Gilbert in 1986 but it is believed that this was first suggested by Francis Crick in 1968. Catalytic RNAs also provide solution to the *chicken versus egg* problem, as these do not need proteins as RNA itself can act as an enzyme.

With the discovery of 'extremophiles' and 'hyperthermophiles,' some scientists put-forth the hot environment of undersea 'hydrothermal vents' as a likely birthplace for life whereas others favour 'cold soup' conditions for this.

The abiogenesis and origin of life and evolution, according to some, could not accommodate the second law of thermodynamics, which is partially a universal law of decay so that the total amount of entropy in nature is on increase. Some think that evolutionists should drop their theory in favour of

teleology and creationism. According to the latter, the design and purpose of cells and life stems from a careful plan and coded information, which has been passed from one life to the next since the original inception. Some believe that the second law of thermodynamics does not prevent evolution on earth since the planet is an open, and not closed, system and receives energy from outside, the sun.

Interestingly, Arrhenius gave an alternative, which still is believed and debated, that life is eternal and has been spread from world to world by the process of panspermia. It has been also suggested that 'primitive material' could come from comets, asteroids or meteorites. This material is demonstrated to be routinely exchanged between worlds as a result of major impacts giving rise to the possibility of 'ballistic panspermia'. However, terrestrial abiogenesis cannot be completely ruled out by panspermia. It is to be noted here that at least one spontaneous generation of life must have occurred in the distant past somewhere because panspermia could only move the life from one world to another.

Evolution could not get started until there were self-replicating forms of life. The primitive self-replicating forms could evolve over a long period to give rise to complex organisms through mutation and natural selection.

In summary, it is estimated as follows:

- The earth was formed about 4.5 billion years ago but was probably incompatible with life until perhaps 3.8 billion years ago. So life apparently appeared relatively quickly.
- All life on earth is believed to have descended from an original primordial single cell organism, which lived about 3.5 to 3.7 billion years ago.
- Humans and mice share a common ancestor, which lived about 50 million years ago.

- Humans and new world monkeys share an ancestor, which lived about 7 million years ago.
- All humans descended from a single individual who lived about 270,000 years ago.

Earlier records of the existence of hominids, which probably were the base link for evolution of the present-day man, are found in fossilized forms. These support the view that hominids appeared in four to five waves comprising (i) Ramapithecus (existing about 15 million years ago) and Australopithecus (dating one to four million years ago), (ii) Pithecanthropines or Archanthropians (dating 500,000 years ago and surviving for about 350,000 years), (iii) Neanderthals or Paleanthropians (dating 100,000 years ago and lived approximately for 60,000 years). (iv) *Homo floresiensis*, so-named because it was recently identified by Australian and Indonesian scientists from a cache of fragmented bones buried in the sediments of a limestone cave on the remote Indonesian Island of Flores (dating 90,000 years ago to as late as 12000 BC), and (v) forms such as Combe-Capelle Man and Cro-Magnon Man which appeared some 40,000 years ago and from which our own species *Homo sapiens* evolved. Some of these were overlapped. *Homo floresiensis*, for example, co-existed if not actually interacted with Cro-Magnon Man. A view is that Neanderthals co-habited with early Homo sapiens, at least to an extent. *Homo floresiensis* has also been nicknamed as *Homo hobbitus*[33] because of his small size; this group of hominids were on an average length of a metre or so, had the brain-size of a grapefruit but were capable of advanced behaviour!

3.3. The human beings in India: The people of India

Traces of human activity can be found in India sometimes in between 400,000 and 200,000 B.C. By the middle paleolithic period (50,000 - 20,000 B.C.), humans had spread to many parts

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33 Reminiscent of J.R.R. Tolkien's Hobbits.

of the Indian subcontinent. Neolithic (7,000 - 5,000 B.C.) settlements are numerous in India. The Indus valley civilization began around 3000 B.C. and lasted for about 1500 years.

The first group to invade India were the people from north, often called Aryans, in about 1500 BC. The so-called Arya-Dravidian division is really linguistic in nature. It appears beyond doubt that Austric languages are descended from the neolithic people. Although there is considerable debate whether Dravidian languages owe their origin to neolithic people of southern India or whether they were brought into India, there is evidence that Dravidian speakers, who included settled agriculturalists, predominated both northern and southern India.

As stated above, the period around 1500 B.C. saw the entry of Indo-Aryan speakers from Bactria and Iran. The second great invasion into India occurred around 500 BC when the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius conquered the Indus Valley. The Persians were, in turn, conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. They swept through the country as far as the Beas river where King Porus was defeated in 326 BC. During the period from 1500 BC. to about 1100 AD, north-west and northern India turned into a melting pot. The Muslims, starting with Mahmud of Ghazni in 1001 and later Mohammed of Ghor in 1192, invaded India and eventually Turkish rule and afterwards the Mughal rule were established. In 1610, the East India Company created its own outpost at Surat. The British Crown seized total control of the company after the mutiny of 1857. The country regained freedom only in 1947 after giving a heavy price in the form of its partition.

Owing to this history, Islam and Christianity found their way in the sub-continent, the former being relatively more prominent. Besides original immigrants/invaders of these religions, the proselytised Hindus also led to the growth of the followers of these religions. While it is true that Christianity came into most parts of India during the last 300 years, it has reached India

much earlier, nearly 2,000 years ago. Today, it remains at about 2.4 per cent of the Indian population.

Morphologically, based on characteristics such as people being dolico-/brachy-cephalic, either platyrrhine or with prominent nose, and presence/absence of epicanthic fold, complexion, hair, stature etc., the people of India may be broadly classified into four categories, namely, Negrito, Australoid, Mongoloid and Caucasoid. Among these, the Caucasoids are widespread in the country. There is, however, a great amount of in-group variation both of genetic and environmental origins. Some believe that there are traces of as many as seven (sub-) races of humans who intermixed to create the Indian race. These are (i) Negrito, (ii) proto-Australoid, (iii) a certain dolico-cephalic people of middle built (in the Paleolithic age), (iv) a robust dolico-cephalic people believed to have contributed to the North Western Indian population, (v) slightly short similar to Mediterranean race, (vi) a brachycephalic Alpo-Dinarian race, and (vii) a proto-Nordic (dolico-)-mesocephalic big-faced robust race. In addition, there was also a small amount of trans-Himalayan migration effect. Largely, the people are Caucasoid and believed to be largely of Western Eurasian origin (in accord with the Dravidian-proto-Elamite or the Indo-European hypothesis). A lot of DNA evidence has, of late, come towards the study of the effect of region, caste, endogamy, etc. which confirms the large variation present, the north-west India showing the maximum heterozygosity known among world population. We have already seen how this region had become a melting pot owing to continuous invasions in the past. India is, therefore, rightly known for unity in diversity.

3.4. The Indian religious view of the universe and time

The universe *Brahmāṇḍa* or the nature, as per the Indian *Vedic* philosophy, has been described in several scriptures. There is believed to be but one true divine principle that manifests to form the universe or the birth of the cosmos from the monistic

'Hiraṇyagarbha' or the Golden Womb. The *Ṛg Veda* points towards the complexity and a degree of uncertainty about the nature of the origin of universe

The famous and oft-cited Creation Hymn of the *Ṛg Veda* (*Ṛg Veda* X 129)[34] states:

In the beginning of the universe, not even 'nothingness' was there; existence was not there; air was not there; sky was not there; even gods came into being after the creation, therefore, who knows that how the universe came into being and how the creation and origin of it came about.

The origin of the universe is, thus, obscure; true nature of the origin of universe is doubtful and cannot be ascertained. The above hymn also establishes one positive feature of the Indian philosophy that there was enough scope for freedom of thought and also for having doubts even during the *Vedic* period.

Other religions also have almost the same view. The Biblical view of Genesis is that "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth (Verse 1, Old Testament); and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep (Verse 2). And God called the dry land the earth; and the gathering together of the water called the seas (Verse 10)."[35]

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34 Also known as *Nasdiya Sūkta* of the Tenth Canto of the *Ṛg Veda.*

35 An interesting discussion of this and especially of the origin of man is given by Bucaille where he compares the views expressed in scriptures of monotheistic religions and those held by scientific community.

- Maurice Bucaille.1976. *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science* [La Bible, le Coran et la Science]. Seghers, Paris. Indian Edition (In English), 1995, Millat Book Centre, New Delhi. pp. 1-252.
- Maurice Bucaille.1983. *What is the Origin of Man?* Seghers, Paris. Indian Edition (In English), Millat Book Centre, New Delhi. pp.1-219.

3.4.1. THE ELEMENTS AND SECTIONS OF THE UNIVERSE

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* gives details of the sections/parts of the universe.

The universe is composed of five sheaths.[36]

1. Food sheath or *annamaya kośa,* consisting of physical matter;
2. Air sheath or *Prāṇamaya kośa,* consisting of living beings such as plants and animals;
3. Mental sheath or *Manomaya kośa,* consisting of primary intellect such as instincts;
4. Intellectual sheath or *Vigyānamaya kośa,* consisting of high intellect, logic, etc. which are specific to human beings only; and
5. The bliss sheath or *ānandamaya kośa,* the highest section that is full of eternal bliss.

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of the world. It does not believe that the God is a Creator, Survivor, or Destroyer of the universe as is commonly believed in the Hinduism. Jainism asserts that the universe has always existed and will always exist in exact adherence to the laws of the cosmos. There is nothing but infinity both in the past and in the future.

Jainism believes that the universe is made from the combination of the six universal substances viz. *Jīva, Pudgal, Dharma, Adharma, Ākāśa* and *Kāla.* As stated above, all the six substances are indestructible, imperishable, immortal, and eternal and continuously go through countless changes.

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36 (i) अन्नमय कोश, चैतन्य सुप्त, (ii) प्राणमय कोश, चैतन्य स्फुरण, (iii) मनोमय कोश, इंद्रिय संवेदन, (iv) विज्ञानमय कोश, एवं (v) आनंदमय कोश ।

॥तैत्तरीय उपनिषद, सप्तम अनुवाक ॥

The world of reality or universe consists of two classes of objects:

1. Living beings (conscious, *cetana, Jīva*) and
2. Non-living objects (unconscious, *acetana, 'ajīva*).

Non-living objects are further classified into five categories;

Matter (*Pudgal*)
Space (*Ākāśa*)
Medium of motion (*Dharmastikay*)
Medium of rest (*Adharmastikay*)
Time (*Kāla or Samaya*)

The five non-living entities together with the living beings, totalling six, are aspects of reality in Jainism. They are also known as six universal entities, substances or *'dravyas.'* These six entities of the universe, however, do undergo countless changes, but nothing is lost or destroyed. Everything is recycled in another form.

Tulsidas' Śri Rāma Carita Mānas describes five elements viz. earth, water, fire, space and air in an uncomplicated manner, which can be easily understood by a common man[37]. These five elements are worshipped as gods. Further, other gods are also associated with these as tabulated below.

Sl.	Element	God associated with	Worshipped through
1.	Earth	Śiva	Stone form
2.	Water	Ganeśa	First to be worshipped
3.	Air	Sūrya	*'Praṇām'*
4.	Space	Viṣṇu	Feelings/words
5.	Fire	Śakti ('Maheśvari')	*'Havan'*

This relationship is as stated in scriptures[38].

37 क्षिति जल पावक गगन समीरा।
पंच रचित यह अधम सरीरा॥
38 आकाशस्याधियो विष्णुरग्नेश्चैव महेश्वरी।

3.4.2 VISUALISING THE GREAT SPAN OF TIME

Indian scriptures tell us that the ancient '*ṛṣis*' and philosophers had a right vision of the greatness of the universe and the great span of time. As per the scriptures, the vastness of time, going much beyond human years, was expressed as *yuga*, '*mahāyuga*', '*manvantara*,' '*kalpa*' etc. Duration of some of these are given below.

Name of the time-period	Duration in man years
Satyuga	1,728,000
Tretāyuga	1,296,000
Dvāparyuga	864,000
Kaliyuga	432,000
Mahāyuga (Total of above four)	4,320,000
Manvantara (71 '*Mahāyugs*')	306,720,000
Kalpa (*Brahm*'s one day and one night)	8,640,000,000

The universe passes through endless cycles of creation and destruction (perpetual cycles similar to big bang and big crunch). Each cycle lasts for trillions of years i.e. the life-span of *Brahmā* or about 331 trillion years. Each cycle has sub-cycles of local creation and destruction that accounts for one day of *Brahmā* or 4.32 billion years. The conclusion is that the Indian saints and philosophers had the realisation of the vastness of universe and time.

3.4.3. INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY WITH RELIGION: DEEP ECOLOGY

As per Indian view, after the creation of man, it is *Brahmā* who has to preserve and augment the prosperity (*Śri*) and well-being (*Bhūti*) of the earth. Biodiversity has been one of the major concerns. The Indian religion believes that all plants and animals possess the soul and have the same status in this regard as man. There is an interdependence. The doctorine of Dependent Origination or *Pratitya-samutpāda* of Buddhism also favours 'deep

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वायोः सूर्यः क्षितेरीशो जीवनस्य गणाधिपः ॥

ecology' that is ecocentric[39] rather than 'shallow ecology' that is anthropocentric or human-centred. 'Deep ecology' does not separate humanity from nature. Nature is like a web of life[40] with all strands interconnected. The 'Shallow Ecology Movement', as Naess[41] calls it, is the fight against pollution and resource depletion, the central objective of which is 'the health and affluence of people' whereas the Deep Ecology Movement endorses biospheric egalitarianism. Several saints, who rose to the level of gods, had prominent association with and are identified with specific trees. Some examples are given in the table below.

Sl.	**Plant/Tree**		**Associated with**
	Name as in scriptures	**Scientific name**	
1.	*Bodhi Vṛakṣa / Svathe*	*Ficus religiosa*	Buddha
2.	*Nyāgrodha*	*Ficus bengalensis*	Kaśyapa
3.	*Udambara*	*Ficus glomerata*	Kanaka Muni
4.	*Sirisa*	*Albizzia lebbeck*	Krakuchand
5.	*Aśoka*	*Saraca indica*	Vipasi
6.	*Puṇḍarika*	*Neiumbium speciosum*	Sikhi

Several other plants are also associated with gods. *Garuḍa Purāṇa* describes in detail as to which plant and which part of it should be offered to which god and in which month of the Hindu calendar. In general, some plants or their specific parts are offered to certain gods and are a matter of common knowledge even today as given below in tabular form.

39 K.C. Pandey (Ed). 2007, *Ecological Perspectives in Buddhism.* Readworthy, New Delhi. P. 1-289.

40 Fritjof Capra 1996. *The web of life: a new scientific understanding of living systems.* Anchor Books, New York.

41 Naess, Arne. 3000 Identification, Oneness, Wholeness and Self-realization. In *'Environmental Ethics'* Ed. Jhon Benson Routledge . London P. 241-256.

Sl.No	Plant/Tree		Part of the plant	Offered to god/ goddess
	Indigenous name/as in scriptures	Scientific name		
1.	*Bel*	*Aegle marmelos*	Trifoliolate leaves	*Śiva*
2.	*Mandāra*	*Erythrina indica*	Trifoliolate leaves	*Śiva*
3.	*Dhatura*	*Datura fastuosa*	Flowers	*Śiva*
4.	*Śiva-liṅga*	*Couroupita guianensis*[42]	Flowers	*Śiva*
5.	*Gudahal*	*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*	Flowers	*Kāli*

Even today, certain tribes are known to preserve trees as a part of their religion. Bishnois of Rajasthan are one of them. It is a well-known fact that several of them earned the wrath of the king/ruler and even laid down their lives for preserving the Khejadi trees (*Prosopis cineraria*) of the desert.

Testing of seed germination and vigour though *kajliyān* and *jawāre*, exchange of germplasm through these occasions on a community basis, hydro-priming for seed-invigoration before sowing are some examples of the age-old practices which are still followed and are now being documented as indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK).

It is evident from these examples that Indian religious beliefs are integrated with nature and more so with preservation and augmentation of biodiversity.[43]

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42 This is an endangered species of plant that is available/conserved owing to its religious significance, for example, in Mahendragiri Hills, Eastern Ghats, Orissa.

43 Interested readers are suggested to refer to the publications of the Asian Agri-History Foundation, Hyderabad, a non-profit trust founded by Dr. Y.L. Nene.

3.5. Nothing remains unchanged

The quest for stable and immortal components is well justified but it is to be well understood that this stability and even immortality is relative and these do not exist *per se* if the same form, in the same state and at the same time is meant to be stable or immortal. The universe is changing every moment.

If there is occurrence or recurrence of a cycle, it does not mean that the same time and the same components are there. The origin and fading out of the stars, expansion and contraction of the galaxies and the universe, the traverse from big bang to black hole, and the evolution and destruction of life forms may all form a cycle but each cycle and components thereof could only be similar to that of preceding and succeeding cycles and would never be the same. The land on earth was in one piece before the continental drift started; in the end it will be again one piece of land with all the continents united. Both these conditions would be similar but not the same.

As per the scriptures, even the gods will change after a certain period. Their being in that status is tenurial when accounted against the vastness of time. It is to be noted that after a certain period, even the Gods of Trinity i.e. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa are not the same and are changed. A common man does not seem to be aware of these facts.

As per Jainism, components of the universe undergo countless changes, but nothing is lost or destroyed. Everything is recycled in another form.

I had been a wanderer and even when there was no need to have a shift, I myself have opted for the change from one place to another and from one status to another. I once had a feeling to go back to a suburban place where I had spent several years as an adolescent. There was a kind of nostalgia in it. I had vivid memory frames of the place, people and events. When I reached there, majority of the things have changed. I could say that I met

the same people, but in real sense they were not the same. I was also not the same. People had changed, place had changed, environment had also changed and I had the fear that the present, if viewed longer, would change my memory frames as well. What remained of those days is in my memory only.

One cannot relive the same moment (again). One cannot relive any moment. The wise men say: "You cannot cross a river twice." One cannot cross the same river twice as that very water which you had crossed once had now flown down many miles ahead. It is not the same river now. It is not the same water as it was earlier. It has changed. Several films and acts attempt to recreate historical events. No matter, how good an attempt is, it could only be similar but never the same. Sometimes two persons get changed so much that their earlier relations, though of the same birth, seem to have belonged to an earlier birth.

What one is going through presently is, therefore, bound to change. Our thinking and acts, hence, need to be viewed and oriented accordingly.

Man is also bringing and attempting to bring changes of both genetic and environmental nature[44] as related to him. Some of the changes may seem as miracles. Both nature *per se* and its intelligent constituents like human beings bring about miracles. The unfolding drama of scientific pursuit extends our understanding and, through its applications, does make the miracles happen.

What are miracles? Man's being here on this earth itself is a miracle when compared to other planets and exo-planets. Miracle is unfolding of nature's such manifestations of which man was yet unaware and that are uncommon. Arthur C. Clarke states, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

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44 Eugenics and euphenics were the terms being used for efforts made towards improving man's genetic endowment and his environment respectively.

What we call as 'reality' is really and merely the 'reality of the present.' It could be only a working hypothesis based upon our limited understanding of the infinitude of nature. As our understanding progresses, the present working hypothesis, the reality of the present, could be changed and taken over by another reality, which again would, in fact, be a (new) working hypothesis.

The universe is ever changing and progressing. We should become a positive and affirmative partner in that growth. We should not merely enjoy the fruits of that growth but contribute towards its sustenance and augmentation also. We should never plunder the nature. We should always be in harmony with nature. We have to maintain a "cosmic piety." Rationalist philosopher Bertrand Russell has expressed grave concern over "cosmic impiety."

The universe is not static. It is dynamic. If one does not evolve accordingly, one would lose his relevance; one could, then, eventually lose one's existence too. It is to be remembered that, as Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the naturalist stated, it is neither necessarily the mighty nor the most intelligent ones who survive and flourish but those who are capable of evolving and modifying themselves as per contemporary and emergent needs, do.

4

Existence of God

It is an often-faced query as to whether or not there is something called 'God' (here we are not talking of different forms in which God is perceived but God as a basic acceptance). The Indian religions explains it both on the basis of reason and faith that the God is there. Most of the arguments in the Indian and Western religions are not offered to people who do not believe in God but to those who have vague and confused idea of God.

French thinker Voltaire had remarked that if God did not exist, we would have had to invent Him. Western culture is largely centred on the limit-experience of Being and Plenitude, whereas the eastern is centred on the consciousness-limit of Nothing and Emptiness. Raimon Panikkar, a Catholic theologian, says that the former is attracted by the world of things as they reveal to us the transcendence of Reality. The latter is attracted by the world of the subject, which reveals to us the impermanence of that very Reality. Both are preoccupied with the problem of 'ultimacy,' which many traditions call God.

4.1. Proofs advanced for the existence of God

St. Thomas' proofs for the existence of God are most famous and most discussed. Man, by birth, may not be a born believer. The doctrine of the innateness of God's knowledge is, hence, rejected. This also explains the fact that there are numerous atheists in the world. Even if there is some degree of innate disposition for knowing God, this requires some proof. It is so because by 'God,' everyone does not mean the God.

The classical empiricism believes that mind at birth is a clean slate or *tabula rasa* and all the characters of knowledge are required through sense-experience. According to rationalism, however, intellect is an independent source of knowledge. The theory of innate ideas was transformed into that of *a priori* truths by Kant.

The proofs for existence of God are mainly from (i) motion, (ii) series of efficient and contingent causes, (iii) graded excellence, and (iv) teleological argument. Let us look at these in a little detail.

There is motion in the world. So, there must be a First Mover that moves without being moved by anything else. This First Mover is understood by everyone to be God.

Every cause is supposed to be caused by another. If every cause has a prior cause of it, this will lead to infinite regress in the long run. Therefore, one has to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.

Things have contingency. A thing that exists now may not exist at another time. It has no ground of itself to exist. If everything cannot exist, then at one time there was nothing in existence. If at one time there was nothing in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist. But things are there. They do exist. Hence, all things are not contingent. There is a Being which keeps all contingent things in existence and which by itself has its own ground of existence. So, there is a Necessary Being that exists by its own necessity. All persons speak of this Necessary Being as God.

The world has a graded excellence in it. Things of the world are found to be more or less good. Aristotle argues, "Where there is better, there is best which must be divine." Therefore, there must be a Being in which perfection of goodness, truth, nobleness, etc. is found. There must be a Being that is the ground of all kinds of perfection in which things of the world participate. This Perfect Being is called as God.

There is an order in the universe. The teleological (also physico-theological) argument for the existence of God follows from the beautiful and well-ordered universe. This argument has been stated by Kant to be the oldest, clearest and most accordant with reason but he criticises it as well, in not being able to explain the Creator, the God. This proof was clearly presented by Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle suggests that man beholding the beauty of earth and sea and the majesty of starry heavens cannot but conclude that these wonderful things are works of God.

It was substantiated by St. Thomas as follows. Natural bodies work for an end. This end is achieved by such bodies not fortuitously but by being so designed. Hence, the end is pursued by some Being endowed with knowledge and intelligence. This Being we call as God. This argument, however, is in favour of an architect and not a creator God. It shows that there is an Author of the world, but it does not show that there is a Creator of the universe. A creator God has to produce things as much as the design in them. An architect needs matter to be fashioned into an orderly universe by using intelligence. This means God becomes limited by matter. One may, thus, argue this proof out.

That which itself is created, could be destroyed as well. That which was not created, would be the essence and permanent. That which is created is nature. That which is not created is God. When something is born, it has to die. This applies to all including planets, stars, humans, animals and all other things/forms which have a beginning and which were created. Therefore, the God has to be ever-present and ever-lasting. Above all, the God has to be a Creator and not only an Architect bringing about beauty and order in the existing or already created matter.

Kant could not have been aware of Hume's argument in favour of self-regulating and self-ordering universe. But, since the time of Hume (1711-1776 A.D.) and Kant (1724-1804 A.D.), the view of a self-regulating universe has gained ground, largely under the influence of the theory of Cosmic Evolution. The

theory of mechanical and natural selection in nature is supposed to be sufficient to account for the adaptation of means and ends. Anything that will not be adapted, of itself, in the struggle of existence for the survival of the fittest, would go out of existence. Thus, as Laplace states, there is no need of a hypothesis concerning the author of the universe. Kant says:

'Thus, the physico-theological proof, failing in its understanding, has in the face of this difficulty suddenly fallen back upon the cosmological proof; and since the latter is only a disguised ontological proof, it has really achieved its purpose by pure reason alone ...'

The *Nyāya Darśana* of Gautama (*Akṣapāda*), which has a big series of scriptures/literature spanning from 4th century B.C. to 17th century A.D., has provided arguments and logic to prove the existence of God. These mainly prove the existence of God owing to the need for explaining action, organisation, creation, operation and destruction of the universe, on the basis of scriptures, number, operator for unknown matter/source[45] etc. *Vedānta* believes that, above all, the scriptures prove the existence of God. The above-stated views of different schools may make ponder both the groups comprising: (i) those who think that there is no God, and (ii) those who think that God is there but He leaves no foot-prints to reckon with.

4.2. God in person?

Let us now see if there is God in person. The above-stated proofs show the existence of God but religion requires that this God is a person, a Trinity and a Judge. This is what the reason is probably not competent to establish.

If there be God without sensation and feeling, then He is of no concern to human beings. But if He has, then He will be as changeable as feelings are. Then probably He fails to be eternal.

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45 कार्यात्,आयोजनात्,धृत्यादे, प्रत्ययतः, संख्याविशेषात् एवं अदृष्टात्—न्याय दर्शन ।

Further, if God is corporeal[46] then like all other corporeal things, He will be perishable. On the other hand, if God is incorporeal, then He will be without feeling and will. Thus, following this argument, probably there can be no God at all[47] for human beings. If, however, God is incorporeal and is endowed with moral values, then He will become finite by being limited by moral limits. If not moral, then He will be inferior to man.

There is an interesting and probably factual and reasonable observation regarding the god(s) in form. Numerous forms of gods are accepted, owing to apotheosis and deification. Most of the religions believe that God has some kind of presence. It could be '*Shekhinah*' (light or halo) or even body-forms. Greek god-forms, and for that matter most god-forms, suffer from anthropomorphism. Xenophanes (about 570-480 B.C.), who is known for its tirade against polytheism of the Greeks, observed:

' ...if oxen and horses or lions had hands, and could paint with their hands, and produce works of arts as men do, horses would paint, the forms of gods like horses, and oxen like oxen---- The Ethiopians make their gods black and snob-nosed, the Thracians say their gods have blue eyes and red hair.'[48]

Several religions believe that God cannot take human form at least in the way it is commonly understood.

"He neither has father, nor mother, nor sons nor brothers." (Guru Nanak, Maru)

"Burnt be the mouth that asserts, the Lord takes birth. He is neither born nor dies; neither enters birth nor departs. All pervasive is Nanak's Lord." (Guru Arjan Dev, Rāga Bhairon)

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46 The Stoics maintained that God is corporeal. Carneades (213-129 B.C.) attacked the Stoic view of God, especially that based on teleology.

47 The Epicureans maintained this view.

48 Taken from B. Russell. *A History of Western Philosophy,* London, 1946. p. 59.

4.3. Could man actually know God?

Human attributes cannot be applied to God literally; and yet because man is really related and similar to some extent to God, our attributes do in some sense apply to God. This similar and yet different way of predicating attributes to God is said to be analogical.

Another question, after having believed (by reason as well) that God is there, arises as to whether or not man can 'know' God? If God has a presence, then He can be experienced. Let us examine this in the face of available analysis by philosophers. There are some fundamental differences between man and God as tabulated below.

Sl.	Man	God
1.	Man is (i) body-soul complex, (ii) formed matter, and (iii) potentiality-actuality	In God, there is no matter and no corporeality. He is *actus purus*—pure activity or actuality. There is no potentiality in Him that He has to actualise.
2.	Finite	Infinite
3.	Creature	Creator
4.	Man is part of the world.	God is transcendent to the world and man.

Thus, man could not actually know God. But through his reasoning he knows this much that God exists, but not what He actually is. This is called agnosticism i.e. nothing beyond the bare existence of God can be validly stated. Accordingly, we know only this much that God exists but not His essence or attributes. Whatever attributes are said to belong to God are held by us only analogically. Saint John stated, "No one has ever seen God." God as a form or in person is borne on revelation and rests on faith.

4.4. Absolutising 'God'

It is felt that although many concepts of God exist, it is difficult to "conceive" of God. Words are not concepts and words are not things. Words attempt to express a concept to the most possible extent. God could also not be the only symbol to indicate what the word 'God' (or its any synonym) wishes to transmit. It is more than what it apparently transmits. But, attempts to absolutise the symbol of 'God' may probably obliterate the link not only with religion, on one hand, but also with those people who do not feel the necessity of this symbol, on the other.

The perceptions from absolute and the religious point of view may not agree. There is a problem in that. The essence of religion lies in having communion with God, who is the embodiment of all value afortiori goodness. Religious relationship requires that God should understand and love the worshippers. God is supposed to have a personality. But God having personality becomes a finite being. Hence, both God and religious experience remain incomplete and inconsistent. Ultimately, they are appearances and not the Absolute. Francis Herbert Bradley[49] (1846-1924) states:

"If you identify the Absolute with God, that is not the God of religion. If again you separate them, God becomes a finite factor in the whole. And the effort of religion is to put an end to, and break down this relation—relation which, nonetheless, it essentially presupposes. Hence, short of the Absolute, God cannot rest, and having reached that goal, he is lost and religion with him."

Thus, according to Bradley, God is only a finite aspect of the Abesolute reality.

Here the religion is spoken of as a popular, commonly understood religion. Then, should the religion be limited to a

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49 Francis Herbert Bradley. 1959 Impression (Based on Second Edition, 1897). *Appearance and Reality.* Clarendon Press, London. pp. 395-396.

finite God, as was taught by Mill and William James? However, Bradley does not believe that 'with the lowering of God, religion tends to grow higher.' The criticism here of the God of religion aims at showing that no self, not even the highest self, called God, can be considered as real.

Then, can human beings substitute the popular religion by the one which fulfils the need and joins the odd ends of the Absolute and the finite God. A belief founded otherwise than on metaphysics, and a metaphysics able in some sense to justify that creed, is, hence, needed to fulfil our wishes. Where is that creed? Probably Absolute metaphysics can do it.

The Indian philosophy, however, tells us a way to realise God in His essence as well. It is true that man cannot know God. He cannot do so as long as he is a man but what if the man himself becomes God. Then the knowing, the realisation of God is total. You become Him. This is believing in non-dualism and feeling and being *Brahm* oneself.[50] The *Nirguṇa Brahm* of *Advaita,* well within the religion, is probably close to the Absolute Metaphysics, which could explain the above dilemma.

Even for the hard-liners, it can be stated that if God cannot be proved, it cannot be disproved either. Dermont Lane says, "Even though we do not see the sun directly, we nonetheless participate in the light of the sun. Similarly, God is present in our deepest experience of existence. Even though we do not see God directly, we participate in the omnipresence of God in such experiences."

So the reality of God is safe in the ivory tower of faith, against all attacks of atheism, agnosticism, deism and anthropomorphism. God, therefore, has a rightful claim for being an object of faith, the justification for which comes from moral life. Above all, our own self-realisation would enable us to realize even the formless invisible God.

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50 ब्रह्मभावश्च मोक्षः ।

5

Introduction to Six Prominent Orthodox Schools of Indian Philosophy[51]

The Indian philosophy, as stated earlier, has an aim that is liberation or salvation. It is not a mere discipline for intellectual engagement only. There are several different schools/*darśana* in Indian philosophy. Surprisingly, certain schools like exegesis viewpoint have strong spiritual content without being so much theistic. Hence, there is no ground to any accusation, mostly from the West, that Indian philosophy has predominantly a theistic base rather than a spiritual base.

The six principal rather orthodox schools[52] of Indian philosophy in general and the *Vedic* philosophy in particular are as follows:

1. *Sānkhya* or Enumerationist Viewpoint
2. *Yoga*
3. *Vaiśeṣika* or Atomistic Pluralism Viewpoint
4. *Nyāya* or Logical Realism Viewpoint
5. *Mīmānsa* or Exegesis Viewpoint (*Pūrva Mīmānsa*)
6. *Vedānta* (*Uttara Mīmānsa*)

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51 No comprehensive coverage is intended. This is, hence, aptly called as an introduction and the seekers can eventually go to the original scriptures, and commentary/*bhāṣyas* on them, for details.

52 षड् दर्शनः सांख्य, योग, वैशेषिक, न्याय, मीमांसा एवं वेदांत।

These six are called orthodox schools because all of these have roots in *Vedic* philosophy albeit having their own distinct principles. Some of these are close to each other and could be taken together for better understanding such as *Sānkhya-Yoga*, *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣik* and *Mīmānsa-Vedānta*. Dissimilar and rather different from the *Vedic* philosophy are the so-called unorthodox schools of Jainism, Buddhism and *Cārvāks* (the materialists).

5.1. *Sānkhya*

Sankhya is indeed one of the oldest schools of Indian philosophy. *Sankhya* means *Samyak Khyān* or *Samyak jñāna* or discriminating knowledge. The word *Sānkhya* also denotes counting or numbering. It connotes the 'enumeration' of the categories used by the system to delineate the structure of the universe. *Sānkhya* is said to have been mooted by Kapila. Its principles are founded in several *Upaniṣads* such as *Chāndogya*, *Praśna*, and *Kaṭha* and especially in *Śvetaśvatar Upaniṣad*. *Sānkhya* viewpoint has also got reflected later in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Gītā*. *Sānkhya Pravacana Sūtra* is the main holy book of this sect. It is believed to be written by Kapila although this fact is disputed by some as the book dates back to around 14th century A.D. only. *Sānkhya Kārika* of Ishwar Krishna (2nd century A.D.; not to be misunderstood for Lord *Kṛṣṇa*) is the most accepted and cited old book on *Sankhya*.

Perception (*Pratyakṣa*), inference (*Anumānaa*) and right affirmation (*Āpta Vākya*) are the three *Pramāṇas* or proofs in the *Sankhya* system. The word *'Āpta'* means fit or right. It is applied to the *Vedas* or inspired teachers. *Sānkhya* adopts the theory of evolution (*'āvirbhāva'*) and involution (*'tirobhāva'*). It undermines the foundation of supernatural religions by substituting evolution for creation. The theory that the effect really exists beforehand in its cause is one of the central features of the *Sānkhya* system.

The *Sānkhya* views as found in *Upaniṣads* and early scriptures lean to theism. It is opined that later, when Buddhism offered a challenge to realism, the *Sānkhya* further developed on a purely

rationalistic ground and it was obliged to concede that there was no proof for the existence of God.[53]

Sānkhya delineates the structure of the world and believes in radical dualism. It sharply distinguishes between Primal Nature/*Prakṛti,* and all the products that evolve from it, and the Supreme Spirit/'*Puruṣa. Prakṛti* is the fundamental or primal substance out of which the world evolves. *Prakṛti* itself evolves under the influence of *Puruṣa.* The cause of development or evolution follows a definite law of succession in space, time, mode and causality (*pariṇāma krama niyama*). The human self is framed on the analogy of cosmic scheme. Man is a microcosm in which all the factors of reality are repeated, as it were, but on a reduced scale.

According to the *Sānkhya* philosophy, *Prakṛti* is composed of three *guṇa*s or forces/qualities. *Guṇa* means a cord, a thread or a rope. The *guṇa*s are so called because they bind the spirit. The three *guṇa*s are called *Sattva* (purity, light, harmony), *Rajas* (passion, activity, motion), and *Tamas* (inertia, inertness, darkness, inactivity).

Guṇas	**Characteristics**	**Ultimate product of '*guṇa*'**	**Colour represented[54]**
Sattva	That which exists – potential consci-ousness, perfection, buoyant or light	Goodness and happiness	White because it naturally makes brightness
Rajas	Spurge of all activity	Pain	Red; naturally so, as '*rajas*' is emotion and produces unrest
Tamas	That which resists (right) activity	The state of apathy or indifference; ignorance and sloth	Black since it naturally darkens

53 Extracted from Radhakrishnan. 1923 (Indian Edition 1940, Tenth Impression, 1977). *Indian Philosophy* – Volume 2. Muirhead Library of Philosophy. Blackie & Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd. pp. 1-807. (p. 248-335 on 'The *Sānkhya* System', p. 258 in particular).

54 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* vi.4 as viewed by *Śankārācārya* in *Śankara Bhāṣya* (on *Brahma Sūtra*), i.4.9.

As the three *guṇas* belong to the primal nature (*prakṛti*), they are called *aja* or unborn. They are never separated. They support one another and intermingle with one another like the flame, oil and wick of a lamp.[55] The *sattva* signifies the essence or the form that is to be realized, the *tamas* represents the obstacle to its realization, and the *rajas* represents the force by which the obstacles are overcome and the essential form is manifested. While *sattva* and *'tamas'* form the affirmative and negative beings, the *rajas* refers to the struggle between the two. The terms *'sattva, 'rajas'* and *'tamas'* are employed to mark predominant aspects rather than exclusive characters.

According to *Sānkhya* theory of *Satkāryavād*, a thing is always produced, never created. Production is manifestation and destruction is non-manifestation.

Sānkhya believes in the existence of 25 elements. This is also called as twenty-five categories (*caturviṃśati-tattvas*) of the *Sānkhya* system. These are grouped under the above-stated two viz. non-living *Prakṛti* and living *Puruṣa*. These elements may be grouped as (i) five cognitive senses or organs of perception, (ii) five active faculties or organs of action, and (iii) five subtle primary elements (*tanmātrās*[56]), and (iv) five generic gross elements (*'mahā-bhūta'*). The 25 elements[57] are briefly given in the table below.

Serial no.	Element
Element 1	Nature (*Prakṛti*)
Element 2	The Intellect (*'Mahat'* or *Buddhi*)
Element 3	The self/ The pride of Self (*Ahaṃkāra*)
Element 4	Mind (*Manas*)

55 *Sānkhya Kārika.*

56 *'Tanmatra'*=That Only. *Praśna Upaniṣad*, iv. 8.

57 (i) प्रकृति, (ii) महत् या बुद्धि, (iii) अहंकार, (iv) मनस्, (v)--(ix) पाँच ज्ञानेन्द्रियां, (x)--(xiv) पाँच कर्मेन्द्रियाँ (xv)-(xix) पाँच तन्मात्रा -- रुप,रस, गंध, स्पर्श एवं शब्द, (xx)--(xxiv) पाँच महाभूत -- पृथ्वी, जल, अग्नि, वायु एवं आकाश, (xxv) पुरुष ।

Elements 5 to 9	Five cognitive senses viz. Sight, Taste, Smell, Touch and Hearing.
Elements 10 to 14	Five active faculties viz. Tongue, hands, feet, annus and genital
Elements 15 to 19	Five subtle primary elements (*'tanmātra'*) viz. essences of form/colour, taste, smell, touch and sound
Elements 20 to 24	Five generic gross elements (*'mahā-bhūta'*) viz. earth, water, fire, air and space
Element 25	The Supreme Spirit or *'Puruṣa'*

The five organs of perception are the functions of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The organs of action are the functions of the tongue, feet, hands, and the organs of evacuation (annus) as well as reproduction (genitals). The world as the object of perception has the five subtle primary elements corresponding to the five sense-organs. These are the essences of colour, taste, smell, touch and sound. Five generic gross elements are earth, water, fire, air and space.

Mokṣa in *Sānkhya* is the eventual cessation or the end of pain. It does not take *Mokṣa* as a state of perpetual bliss. It is considered as a property-less state where both pain and pleasure cease to be. Owing to its belief in dualism, *Sānkhya* was not accepted by the proponents of *Vedānta*. Ādi Śankarācārya has identified *Sānkhya* as the major opponent (*'pradhānamalla'*) of *Vedānta*.

5.2. Yoga

Yoga school of philosophy believes in Primal Nature/*Prakṛti*, and the Supreme Spirit/*Puruṣa* as in case of *Sānkhya* but it adds one more element (*tattva*) to those enumerated by *Sānkhya*, making a total of 26 elements. The additional element is that of God in form i.e. *Īśvara*, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. This makes Yoga philosophy theistic, in contrast with the non-theistic approach of the *Sānkhya* school. Owing to this reason, the Yoga school is often called *Śeśvara Sānkhya* or theistic *Sānkhya*. The Yoga system deals with the practical techniques of disintegrating and dissolving the elements to free the *Puruṣa* from its entanglement. When an

individual soul gains release from the fetters of *Prakṛti,* it attains liberation (*Mokṣa*), the ultimate goal of both *Sānkhya* and Yoga.

The sage Maharshi Patanjali (3rd century B.C.) has given aphorisms of Yoga in his *Yoga Sūtra.*' Now there is a growing number of people who practise 'yoga.' Some believe that 'yoga' has no religious base and followers of all religions can get benefit from it.

5.2.1. THE MEANING OF 'YOGA'

The word 'Yoga' is derived from two roots, viz. *yujir* meaning yoking and *yuja* meaning combining/connecting, and according to some, also meaning meditation. 'Yoga,' thus, means re-integration. It deals with the techniques of self-control. It believes that all the powers of the universe are within us[58] and we need to recognise and utilise them in a balanced way for self-emancipation.

Generally, the word 'yoga' is broadly used for several paths of self-realisation such as (i) *'dhyāna yoga'* or contemplation/meditation,[59] (ii) *'gyāna yoga'* which is being one with the *Brahm* through equipoise, equanimity and serenity of mind by the wise and knowledgeable, (iii) *'karma yoga'* i.e. action with non-attachment, and (iv) *'bhakti yoga'* i.e. piety and complete surrender to the Supreme. Strictly, the 'yoga' is of four types, viz.

1. *Mantra Yoga,*
2. Yoga of Concentration,
3. *Hatha Yoga* or Yoga of Austerity, and
4. *Raja Yoga* or Yoga of Kingship.

Patanjali regards 'yoga' as *cittavratinirodha*[60] or silencing of all activities of the mind. For purity of thoughts,[61] eight sections[62]

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58 यथा ब्रह्माण्डे तथा पिण्डे ।

59 धारणा—ध्यान—समाधि

60 योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः । *Yoga Darśana,* 1/2.

61 चित्तशुद्धि ।

62 यम, नियम, आसन, प्राणायाम, प्रत्याहार, धारणा, ध्यान एवं समाधि । *Yoga Darśana* 2/29.

viz., (i) restraint, (ii) observances, (iii) posture, (iv) breath control, (v) withdrawal or sublimation, (vi) attention and concentration, (vii) contemplation or meditation, and (viii) deep meditation or union with the Supreme, are to be followed.

There are five restraints or *Yamas* viz., (i) *Ahimsa* or non-violence, (ii) *Satyam* or truthfulness, (iii) *Brahmacarya* or moderation in all things (control of all senses) and celibacy, (iv) *Asteya* or non-stealing, and (v) *Aparigraha* or non-covetousness.

There are again five observances or *niyamas*[63] viz., (i) *Śauca* or purity including internal and external cleanliness, (ii) *Santoṣa* or contentment, (iii) *Tapas* or austerity, (iv) *Svādhyāya* or study of the sacred texts, and (v) *Prāṇidhāna* that is living with a continuing awareness of the divine Presence and surrender to God's will.

According to the school of Patanjali, there are five mental planes[64] viz., (i) *Kṣipta* wherein the mind wavers and wanders among sensual objects, (ii) *Mūḍha* wherein the mind is asleep or inactive, (iii) *Vikṣipta* wherein the mind oscillates between concentration or meditation and objectivity or materialism, (iv) *Ekāgra* wherin the mind is focused and pointed, and (v) *Niruddha* wherein the mind is under control and the base indulgences are annihilated.

There are five afflictions (*kleśas*) viz., (i) ignorance or nescience (*avidyā*), (ii) egoism (*asmita*), (iii) desire (*rāga*), (iv) aversion (*dveṣa*), and (v) desire to live and cling to mundane life (*abhiniveśa*). The yogic practices reduce these afflictions. Eradication of these could, however, be accomplished by yoga of high order only such as the absolute meditation and experience (*asampragyāt samādhi*).

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63 शौचसंतोषतप स्वाध्यायेश्वयप्रणिधानानि नियमा । *Yoga Darśana* 2/32.

64 क्षिप्तं मूढं विक्षिप्तमेकाग्रं निरुद्धमिति चित्तभूमयः ।*Vyāsabhāṣyam Yoga Darśan* 1/1.

Ādi Śankarācārya states that keeping silence, abstinence from accumulation of material as well as from activity and desires, and solitude or secluded existence are the requisites of 'yoga.'[65]

5.2.2. HUMAN BODY AND ITS CENTRES

The human body, for the purpose of 'yoga,' has been identified to comprise (i) the physical body, (ii) the astral body and, (iii) the causal body. There are different yogic practices prescribed for these. For physical body, there are purification practices like *dhauti, neti, vesti'* and others like *āsanas*. For astral body, breath control or *Prāṇāyāmas;* etc. have been prescribed. For causal body, *mudras*, meditation and others like *yoga nidra* have been prescribed. These facilitate a person's journey from apparent and big to the core or the subtle.

As per 'yoga,' there are seven centres or *cakras* of human body. These are tabulated below along with their situation and form or symbol that represents each one of them.

Sl.	*'Cakra'*/centre	Situation	Form symbol
1	*Mūla Ādhāra Cakra*	At the base of the spine; between the root of reproductory organ and anus; *'Guda Cakra'*	Lotus with four petals
2	*Svādhisthāna Cakra*	Behind the reproductory organ, in the spine	Lotus with six petals
3	*Manipura Cakra*	Behind the naval, in the spine	Lotus with ten petals
4	*Anahata Cakra*	Behind the heart, in the spine; *Hṛdaya Cakra*	Lotus with twelve petals
5	*Viśuddhi Cakra*	Behind the throat, in the spine; *Kaṇṭha Cakra*	Lotus with sixteen petals

65 योगस्य प्रथमं द्वारं वाङ् निरोधोऽपरिग्रहः ।
निराशा च निरीहा च नित्यमेकान्तशीलता ॥ विवेक चूड़ामणि, 368 ॥

6	*Āgya Cakra*	Between the two eyes; confluence of *iḍa, piṅgala* and *suṣumna;*[66] *Gyān Cakṣu / Śiva Netra* / Third Eye /Third Mole	Lotus with two petals
7	*Sahastrāra Cakra*	At the crown of the head; *Brahm-randhra*	Lotus with a thousand petals; *sahastradala kamala*

The base *'Mūl Ādhāra Cakra'* is believed to have the root of all *nāḍis* out of which *iḍa, piṅgala* and *suṣumna* are the main which go upto the sixth i.e. *Āgya Cakra.* Interestingly, seven cities of India have been similarly and probably correspondingly identified as seven centres.[67]

Although it is not the purpose of this book to comprehensively review the medical evidences on this aspect, it is to be noted that some medical evidences have started accumulating i.e. the sections/stages mentioned above have some correspondence with the anatomy and functioning of different parts of brain, especially the limbic system of brain. Some portions of frontal and temporal brain show increased activity during meditation. There exists a mixture of external and internal noise. Brain produces some internal noise also. This noise, when heard through meditation, will probably be *'anhad nāda.'* Parietal and occipital portion of the brain produces internal noise. On prolonged meditation, this is lessened. However, more research and evidences are needed to support this correlation/correspondence.

66 इडा, पिंगला एवं सुष्मना

67 अयोध्या, मथुरा, माया (मनीपुर), काशी, कांची, अवंतिका ।
पुरी, द्रविडावती चैव, सप्तैदे मोक्ष दायिका ॥

5.2.3. BODY PURIFICATION

Six types of yogic purification practices[68] are known. These are:

Sl.	Purification practice	Consists of
1	*Dhauti*	Washing; generally cleansing of the stomach, intestine etc.
2	*Neti*	Cleansing of nostrils; accepting through nose.
3	*Nauli*	Churning of the belly; rotating the stomach.
4	*Vasti*	Natural form of enema, sucking water or air through rectum
5	*Trāṭak*	Staring; steady or continuous gazing at an object unwinkingly.
6	*Kapāla Bhāti*	A type of breath control or 'prāṇayāma'[69]; forcible expulsion of abdominal breath through the nose and its retention; also leads to removal of the phlegm.

These yogic practices are followed to cleanse the body and mind and to increase the concentration.

5.2.4. MUSCULAR CONTRACTIONS, LOCKS OR *BANDHAS*

There are three types of muscular contractions or locks or *bandhas* that are practised singly or altogether during several other yogic practices such as *Prāṇayāmas*. The three locks altogether are also practised as *'tri-bandha'*, the fourth type.

1. *Mūla Bandha* or 'Root Contraction:' This *bandha* is at the root of the spine. Contract the anus, draw upwards the air part (*apan vāyu*) above it. It is believed that through this practice one gains control over the alimentary canal, removes weaknesses of the excretory organs, helps in wind breaking of undesirable air and, thus, betters the digestive power.

2. *Udiyan Bandha* or 'Flying Contraction' or 'Naval Holding Contraction:' This *bandha* is at the root of the naval. Contract and

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68 षट्कर्मः धौति, नेति, वेस्ति, त्राटक, नौलि एवं कपालभाति ।

69 Detailed later in this chapter.

draw up the intestines and also the naval towards the back. It is believed that this practice is helpful in activating the main *nāḍi* centre.

3. *Jalandhar Bandha* or 'Net Holding Contraction:' Press the chin firmly on the chest and contract the throat.

4. *Tri-Bandha*: The above three locks when practised altogether simultaneously are collectively called as *tri-bandha*. The *Tri-bandha* stabilises our *prāṇa*. While opening the locks in *tri-bandha*, first the *Udiyan Bandha* is to be released; thereafter, the *Jalandhar Bandha* and finally the *Mūla Bandha* are released.

5.2.5. BREATH CONTROL OR *PRĀṆĀYĀMAS*

According to Patanjali,[70] *Prāṇāyāma* is the act of controlling breath including both inhalation and exhalation, after attaining stability in a posture (*āsana*). Breathing continues unabated from birth to death in a human body. This air is the *Prāṇa* but it is believed that breath is the gross (*sthūla*) form of *Prāṇa* which itself is subtle (*sūkṣam*). Thus, the breath is the external manifestation of *Prāṇa*, the life energy or the finest vital force. There is close connection between the gross and the subtle *Prāṇa*. It is stated that our life span consists of specific number of breaths. The more breath per unit time, say a minute, the shorter is the life. Apart from benefits to the physical body, *prāṇāyāma* stabilises the mind and the poise of mental body.[71] It is the restrain of vital energy, or the *Prāṇa*. It further prepares a person for meditation and in being the spiritual body. Thus, a person who is adept in controlling his *Prāṇa* eventually may also come to the pinnacle of realising and unifying with the universal Prāṇic-energy.

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70 तस्मिन सति श्वास-प्रश्वास योगीति विच्छेद प्राणायामः ॥ योगसूत्र, 11—49 ॥

71 चले वाते चलं चित्तं निश्चले निश्चलो भवेत् ।

If the *Prāna* wanders, mind too wanders.
If the *Prāna* stabilises, the mind too stabilises.

The practice of *prāṇāyāma* is divided into three parts, viz. exhalation (*recak*), (ii) inhalation (*pūrak*), and (iii) retention (*kumbhak*) of the breath. The retention of breath can be internal that is after inhalation or could be external i.e. after exhalation.[72]

There are various types or techniques of *prāṇāyāma*. The important or most practised ones are enumerated below. These are performed by sitting in *padmāsana* or any other convenient sitting posture such as *sukhāsana*, keeping the neck and the spine straight, being in a cheerful condition and generally closing the eyes. For all the neophytes, a teacher is needed to expose and train the person to/in *Prāṇāyāmas*.

1. ***Bhastr̥ka*** **(The Bellows):** Rapid succession of forcible expulsions of breath like the blowing of blacksmith's bellows is known as '*bhastr̥ka prāṇāyāma*.' In it, one has to go on inhaling and exhaling with medium pace. In *bhastr̥ka*, force is needed in both inhalation and exhalation. *Bhastr̥ka* is believed to be helpful in curing the ailments caused by all the three, viz. wind, phlegm and bile.[73]

2. ***Kapālabhāti*:** *Kapāla* in Sanskrit means the skull and *bhāti* means to 'shine.' Thus, *kapālabhāti* means making the skull shine. It is also taken as one of the six cleansing or purification processes. It consists in forcible expulsion of abdominal breath through both the nostrils and its retention in quick succession. While exhaling, the stomach should go inside i.e. towards the spine. The normal breath is automatically inhaled inside. It is a sister-*prāṇāyāma* of *bhastr̥ka*. In *Kapālabhāti*, breath is to be expelled out with full force in quick succession and no effort is needed to inhale it whereas in *bhastr̥ka*, full force is needed in both inhalation and exhalation.

3. ***Anuloma-Viloma Prāṇāyāma*** **(The reciprocal or with- and – against *prāṇāyāma*):** Inhale through the left nostril and exhale

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72 आंतरिक एवं बाह्य कुंभक ।

73 वायु, कफ एवं पित्त ।

through the right nostril. Then, inhale through the right nostril and exhale through the left. Repeat the process as stated above.

4. ***Bāhya* (external retention of breath):** Take deep breath. Exhale and empty the lungs. Retention of breath after exhalation is practised which is also called as *bāhya kumbhak*. During retention, follow *tri-bandha* as described earlier in this chapter comprising *Jalandhar Bandha, Udiyan Bandha* and *Mūla Bandha*, all together. For this, (a) press the chin on the depression at the neck and lock so that air cannot pass through, (b) draw the stomach and the naval inside pressing it towards the spine, and (c) contract the anus and draw upwards. Stay for about 15 seconds. Release naval/stomach, the chin/throat and finally the anus in that order. As stated earlier. First the *Udiyan Bandha* is to be released; thereafter, the *Jalandhar Bandha* and finally the *Mūla Bandha* are to be released.

5. ***Mūrcna* (The Rising):** Put the respective thumbs into the ears to close them. Put the index fingers on the eyes to close them. Put the middle fingers on the nostrils. Put the little fingers on the lips. Inhale slowly and deeply through the nostrils. Close the nostrils with the middle fingers. Practice internal retention of breath. Perform the three locks or *'tri-bandhas'* simultaneously viz. *Mūla bandha, Udiyan bandha and Jalandhar bandha* (as described earlier in this chapter) altogether. Stay in this position as long as possible. Now release the *Jalandhar bandha* and lift the middle fingers from the nostril slowly and exhale. This makes one round. Repeat the rounds as feasible.

6. ***Agnisar*:** Practice as in case of *Bāhya* but after locking the naval i.e. drawing the stomach inside, move it up and down for 15 to 20 times. Unlock the *Bandhas* in the order as stated above.

7. ***Bhramari*: (The Bee):** Close the eyes gently. Close both the ears using the thumbs. Put the first two (index and middle finger) fingers on the eyes and the last two fingers (ring and the small finger) on the lips. Inhale slowly through the nostrils and fill the lungs with air. Exhale slowly producing the buzzing

sound of the bee (*bhramar*). Repeat the action. Internal retention of breath i.e. retention after inhalation, helps in further making the buzzing rhythmical and effective.

8. ***Udgīta*:** Close the eyes. Inhale fully i.e. take a deep breath. Chant '*Oṃ*' ('a', 'u' and 'm'). Repeat it.

9. ***Plāvini*:** *(The Floating):* Open the mouth in a round shape, as done in case of whistling. Start sipping the air in the same manner in which the water is sipped. Let the stomach be bloated with air. Close the mouth and hold the breath for a few moments. Open the mouth and let the tongue protrude out; bend forward from the lower part of the back and exhale the air completely out of the lungs. Repeat the cycle as feasible.

5.2.6 MEDITATION AND DEEP MEDITATION *(DHYĀNA* AND *SAMĀDHI)*

Dhyāna is concentration (on something). We concentrate on several things in our daily chores of life but *dhyāna* or concentration in its real sense is increasing the degree of concentration and to concentrate on the essence and the core rather than on mundane entities. Meditation means detachment of sense organs from outward objects. This is possible after achieving the stability of our physical body and making our mind steady and unwavering and focusing it on the self within. Meditation or *dhyāna* is that state of mind wherein there are no sensual thoughts.[74]

The *Yoga Sūtra* of Patanjali mentions 'Īśvara', the god in form, many a times. It states that by concentrating on 'Īśvara', one can relatively easily succeed in deep meditation.[75]

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74 ध्यान निर्विषयं मनः ॥ योगसूत्र ॥

75 चित्त को ईश्वर में लगाने से समाधि में सुगमता से सिद्धि प्राप्त होती है।
ईश्वर प्रणिधानाद वा ॥ योगसूत्र , 1, 23 ॥
समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात् ॥ योगसूत्र, 2, 45 ॥

Samādhi is the condition that has to be passed through before reaching deliverance. It is the ecstatic condition in which the connection with the outer world is broken. There are degrees of concentration or *samādhi* viz. (i) *sampragȳat* or conscious and (ii) *asampragȳat* or superconscious *samādhi*. The state of conscious ecstasy or *sampragȳat samādhi*, is accompanied by deliberation (*savitarka*), reflection (*savicāra*), joy (*sānanda*), and sense of self /personality (*sasmita*). When the feeling of joy is transcended and is lost in a higher equanimity, there occurs the state called *dharma-megha* in which the isolation of the soul and its complete distinction from matter are realised and action or *karma* operates no more. According to *Vedānta*, in *dharma-megha* the ideas flow in the clearest manner.

Samādhi is not simple and uniform. It is a succession of mental stages, which grow more and more until they end in such unconsciousness that is really super-consciousness. *Asampragȳat samādhi* is concentration where there is no mental mode (*cittavrati*) although the latent impressions may remain. In *sampragyāt samādhi*, there is a clear consciousness of the object reflected upon as distinct from the subject whereas this distinction disappears in the *asampragyāt samādhi*.

5.2.7 *LAYA YOGA* AND *SURAT ŚABDA YOGA*

Laya Yoga implies listening to the divine melody. There are different kinds of sounds, melodies and *nādas*. *Laya Yoga* consists of the absence of rising of passions and forgetting the base indulgences. Thus, *Laya* means ceasing the existence. The passions cease to exist. They see their end in sounds, melodies, *nāda*s and ultimately in the great 'nothingness.'[76] There are four stages of *Laya Yoga* as tabulated below.

76 महाशून्य ।

Sl. No.	Stages[77]	Affecting/inflicting upon	Situation of *'nāda'* or *'laya'*
1	The Beginning	*Anahata Cakra*	Behind the heart, in the spine, *Hṛdaya Cakra*
2	The Pot Stage	*Viśuddhi Cakra*	Behind the throat, in the spine, *Kaṇṭha Cakra*
3	The Introduction	*Āgya Chakra*	Between the two eyes; the Third Eye
4	The last Stage	Awakening the ultimate total spirituality	Above the *Āgya Cakra,* the core of spiritual body

The *'laya'* includes both the words i.e. *śabda/nāma* and the sound or melody i.e. *nāda*. Several sects heavily rely on *Surat Śabda Yoga*. Even Kabir had referred to the *Surat-Śabda Yoga*. *Rādhā Svami Satsaṅga*, founded by Saint Shri Seth Shiv Dayal Singh ji (born in the year 1818), follows this *'yoga'* as its main course. One has to combine the *surat* or soul with *śabda* or the Supreme so that one reaches the state of bliss or *satlok/'sachkhand.'*[78] In the 20th century, Gurudev Mangatram (born in 1903) also advocated it. His teachings are published as *Shri Samatā Prakash* and *Shri Samatā Vilās*. These contain the paths of devotion (*bhakti yoga*), knowledge (*jñāna yoga*), action with non-attachment (*niṣkāma karma yoga*) and *Surat Śabda Yoga*.

Some sects combine *Surat Śabda Yoga* with name or *nāma*. The names (five or one depending upon the sect) are bequeathed by *satguru* to the followers for invocation. Here we have to understand name/*nāma* in a much broader meaning. *Bhakta Tulsidas* states that the value and significance of 'name' is so great that it is difficult to

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77 आरंभावस्था, घटावस्था, परिचयावस्था एवं निष्पत्त्यावस्था।

78 सार बचन छन्द—बचन 22: शब्द 1, पृ.187; बचन 24: शब्द 1,पृ. 205
उपदेश राधास्वामी, सुरत शब्द योग, पृ. 99—100.

describe it.[79] There are two types of *nāmas*- *varṇātmak* and *dhunātmak*.[80] The *varṇātmak nāma* has four types viz.

1. *Baikhari*—the spoken,
2. *Madhyamā*—spoken silently at the level of the neck and not heard,
3. *Paśyanti*—confined to the mental or heart level, and
4. *Parā*—which is created by *yogīs* through creating the waves from their naval.

Thus, there are five names. The four *varṇātmak* names are confined to *sthūla śarīra,* whereas the fifth *dhunātmak* name is at the level of *sūkṣma śarira. Varṇātmak* name is the means whereas the *dhunātmak* name is the aim. The *dhunātmak* name is realised or heard through *Surat Śabda Yoga* as a continuous voice, the *Anahad Nāda.*

There are several thinkers and practitioners who tell the limit of undergoing general yoga, especially *sthūla yoga* and emphasise starting from the *Āgya Cakra* or Third Eye' itself through various methods. They prominently resort to '*Surat Śabda Yoga* for which a saint or *satguru* is needed. The method comprises to start from concentrating in between the two eyes and move further to higher *cakras*. The *śabda* and *nādas* help in this.

For *laya yoga,* the *nāda* is to be heard. To start with, one should not abandon the gross and loud sounds if those are pleasing ones. The mind lost in that sound forgets outward things. Leaving all thoughts, one merges with the sound and enjoys the bliss. Gradually, one goes from gross to subtle sounds. To listen to this sound, the body adjusts its functions like breathing and the inner sound begins to be heard. One transcends his physical being and becomes one with the Supreme.

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79 कहौं कहाँ लग नाम बड़ाई,

राम न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई। रामचरित मानस, बालकाण्ड, दोहा 26/8।

80 वर्णात्मक व धुनात्मक।

Some believe that even the *kuṇḍalini* power is also achieved through the *laya yoga*. The word *kuṇḍalini* means coiled-up. As a serpent coils up in sleep, the basic energy i.e. *kuṇḍalini* lies dormant in *Mūlādhāra Cakra*. It is to be awakened to experience the bliss. It is awakened from the base upwards through the *Cakras*, the stores of the divine power. It is believed that when *kuṇḍalini* is awakened, the person experiences nine types of *nādas*.[81]

The above mentioned is merely an introductory narration to 'Yoga'. It is to be learnt practically from a *guru* as both guidance and self-efforts are needed for 'yoga'. The interested persons may refer to original scriptures such as *Gītā, Yoga Sūtra, Yoga Darśana*, etc., most of which are in Sanskrit, and to other books[82] for details.

5.2.8 LIBERATION IN YOGA

Liberation or freedom in yoga is called *kaivalya* or absolute independence. In liberation, one has to be independent of actions i.e. *Kāryavimukti* and also independent of mind (*citta*) i.e. *Cittavimukti*, so that only the true self remains. The nescience or *avidyā* is to be removed by discriminative knowledge (*vivekakhyāti*). It is said to have seven stages:

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81 चिणी, चिण्चिणी, घण्टा नाद, शांख नाद, तन्त्री नाद, मृदंग नाद, वेणु, भेरी और मेघादि।

82 (i) *Āsana and Yoga Vigyān*. 2001. Fourth Edition. Bharatiya Yoga Sansthan. Delhi. Pp. 1-202.

(ii) H. Kumar Kaul. 2003. *Yoga: Theory and Practice*. B.R. Publi. Corpn., Delhi. Pp. 1-239.

(iii) Lucy Lidell, Narayani and Girish Rabinovitch. 1983. *The Sivananda Companion to Yoga*. Simon & Schuster Inc., New York. Pp. 1-192.

(iv) Swami Rajarshi Muni. 1999. *Yoga-The Ultimate Attainment*. Jaico Publishing House, India. Pp. 1-200.

(v) Swami Ramdev. 2005. *Yoga—Its Philosophy and Practice*. Divya Prakashan, Kankhal, Haridwar. pp. 1-174.

(vi) Several other books are available.

Forms of liberation (*vimukti*)	Stages
I. *Kāryavimukti*	(i) The thing to be escaped from has been known, and so need not be known again.
	(ii) The reasons for the thing to be escaped from have been dwindled away, and so need not be dwindled away again.
	(iii) The escape is directly perceived by the concentration of restriction (*nirodhsamādhina*).
	(iv) The means of escape in the form of discriminative knowledge has been cultivated.
II. *Cittavimukti*	(v) The authority of *buddhī* is ended.
	(vi) The *guṇas* come to rest.
	(vii) The (true) Self that has severed its connection with the *guṇas* is enlightened by himself and nothing more, and is stainless and isolated.

Liberation is not a mere negation and renunciation but is the eternal life of the *puruṣa,* when freed from the fetters of the primal nature or *prakṛti*. It is defined as the relapse of *guṇas* or qualities (*puruṣārthasūnyānam guṇānam*) in view of the absence of any motive of the self as the energy of intelligence is grounded in itself. The *puruṣa* is, then, in his true form (*svarūpapratiṣṭha*).[83]

5.3 *Vaiśeṣika*

Vaiśeṣika is also one of the oldest schools, of course, after *Sankhya,* of Indian philosophy that acknowledges the authority of *Vedas*. *Viśeṣa* means special or particular. It was founded by Kanad. *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* of Kanad is the first systematic exposition of the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy. He and his followers, the atomists, visualize the physical objects as arrangements of atoms. *Vaiśeṣika* believes in atomistic pluralism. The *Vaiśeṣika* school recognises two sources of knowledge, viz. perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*).

83 *Yoga Sūtra,* iv.34.

Vaiśeṣika classifies matter into six categories which on including deficiency/absence of it, make a total of seven elements viz. (i) substance (*dravya*), (ii) quality/property/attribute (*guṇa*), (iii) activity/motion (*karma*), (iv) generality/universality (*sāmānya*), (v) particularity or discerning characteristic (*viśeṣa*), (vi) combination/co-inherence or perpetual intimate relation (*samavāya*), and (vii) deficiency/absence/non-existence/nothingness (*abhāva*).

Vaiśeṣika believes in atomism i.e. atomic theory of the universe. The formation of the world is supposed to be effected by the aggregation of countless and eternal atoms. An atom is defined as something that is existing, has no cause and is eternal. Atom is less than the least, invisible, indivisible, intangible and imperceptible by the senses. The atoms are eternally aggregated, disaggregated/disintegrated and re-disintegrated by the power that cannot be seen, i.e the *adṛṣṭa*. Actually, Kanada does not directly refer to God. God is inferred as *Adṛṣṭa*, the unseen force of acts (*karmas*).

Virtue (*dharma*), the righteous way of living, is the means to achieve cessation of pain or salvation. *Vaiśeṣika* holds that the destruction of all the distinctive characteristics of the substances that bind the individual soul is the liberation. The plurality of the souls is inferred from differences in status or the variety of conditions. Even after salvation, each soul maintains its uniqueness or individuality but is separated from the instruments of consciousness, the mind and body, and abides in the resultant state of absolute and eternal unconsciousness. Thus, the freed souls are conceived as externally existing with specific differences. This is different from the superconsciousness or pure consciousness of the liberated soul as perceived in the Yoga and *Vedānta* systems.

5.4 *Nyāya*

Nyāya Darśana is believed to have been founded by *Akṣapāda* Gautama. *Nyāya* symbolises logical realism. The term *Nyāya* means right or just, in popular usage. By means of *Nyāya*, the

mind is led to a conclusion. It means testing and analysing the principles or elements through evidences and logic in order to reach a logical conclusion.[84] *Nyāya* is that by which we lead to a conclusion. It is concerned more with logic[85] and epistemology than with revelation. In early periods, there was a practice of question-based verbal duels between learned priests to prove their viewpoints by logic and establish their stand and supremacy. This tradition of dialectical discussions eventually gave rise to logic viewpoint.

Nyāya has a plethora of scriptures/books on it written during the ancient period spanning from 4th century B.C. to 17th century A.D. The *Nyāya Sūtra* of Gautama, comprising five books, is believed to have been written during 200-100 BC. It forms the basic and the first documentation of the *Nyāya*. Vatsayayan's '*Nyāya Bhāṣya*' is the classic commentary on '*Nyāya Sūtra*.'

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika coalescence believes in atomism. The principal feature of atomism is the theory of ever-lasting atoms that constitute the fundamental structure of the cosmos. It believes that bliss is attained through knowledge. Knowledge comes from perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison/analogy (*upamāna*) and verbal yet credible testimony (*śabda*). These are four kinds of proofs in *Nyāya*. The mind makes judgement with the aid of memory. *Nyāya* believes in 16 substances whereas *Vaiśeṣika* believes in seven.

There is emphasis on deductive reasoning or syllogism in *Nyāya*. Syllogism, in general, is a formal deductive argument made up of (i) a major premise, (ii) a minor premise, and (iii) a conclusion, for e.g. all birds have feathers, penguins are birds, and,

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84 नीयते अनेन इति न्यायः ।

85 Understanding of 'inference' in *Nyāya* is seen by some of the modern Western philosophers to have been based on causal relations and not on logical relations. 'Inference' and 'comparison' of *Nyāya* are viewed by some as inadequate from the point of view of modern logic.

therefore, penguins have feathers. However, instead of three, there are five members (*Nyāya Vākya*) of the syllogism in *Nyāya* viz. (i) *pratigya* or the preposition, (ii) *hetu* or the reason, (iii) *udāharaṇa* or the explanatory example, (iv) *upanaya* or the application, and (v) *nigamana* or the statement of conclusion. If the first two members of *Nyāya* syllogism are taken out, the rest three would be like those of Aristotle's first figure and first mood (AAA).

I		II	
Members of syllogism as per *Nyāya*	**Instance**	**Corresponding syllogism (First Figure-First Mood as per Aristotle)**	**Instance**
Proposition	The hill is on fire		
Reason	Because it smokes		
Explanatory example	Whatever shows fire shows smoke	**Major premise**	Whatever shows fire shows smoke
Application	So is this hill	**Minor premise**	So is this hill
Conclusion	Therefore, the hill is on fire	**Conclusion**	Therefore, the hill is on fire

In *Nyāya*, the soul is believed to be distinct from the senses and the mind. Body exists because of the causes viz. soul along with parents and food. This has a similarity with the recent and modern scientific conclusion that genetic endowment (parents) and environment (food etc.) interact to produce phenotype.

Nyāya believes in the existence of God. The proofs for this are stated to come from the obvious need of explaining action, organisation, creation, operation and destruction of the universe, on the basis of scriptures, number, operator for unknown matter / source etc.[86]

86 कार्यतियोजनधृत्यादेः पदात् प्रत्ययतः श्रुतेः ।

Nyāya believes in transmigration of soul and rebirth. Action (*karma*) and defects lead to results/fruits. Liberation is the absolute deliverance from pain and is brought about when knowledge is attained and misconceptions are shed off.

Nyāya believes that liberation (*Mokṣa*) is a state in which one does not experience either pleasure or pain. The liberated beings are devoid of all properties and are similar to a block of wood or a piece of rock. This view has been criticized by several, the prominent among them being Shri Harsh, an exponent of *Vedānta*, who even goes to the extent of calling Gautama (*Akṣapāda*), founder of *Nyāya*, as '*Go-tam*' meaning the Super Bull.[87]

5.5 *Mīmānsā*

Mīmānsā is also referred to as *Pūrva Mīmānsā* because it is earlier than *Uttara Mīmānsā* or *Vedānta*. *Mīmānsa* means devotional thinking or devotional inquisitiveness. The word is also used for investigation (into the meaning of ritualistic texts). It systematizes the 'exegesis' or interpretation of Vedic ritual texts. It started with a focus on deducing principles for analysis and interpretation of the sacred texts that eventually got extended to discussing the theory of knowledge etc. The main and basic scripture of *Mīmānsā* is the *Mīmānsā Sūtra* of Jaimini (200 BC).

Mīmānsā is considered close to *Vedānta*. It deals mainly with the Vedic rituals (*Karma Kānda*), whereas *Vedānta* addresses Vedic knowledge (*jñāna Kānda*). Their propinquity is evident from the first clause of both which states that *Mīmānsā* is the 'inquiry into religion' whereas *Vedānta* is the 'inquiry into the

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वाक्यात् संख्याविशेषाच्च साध्यो विश्वविदव्ययः ॥ न्याय कुसुमांजलि, 5—1 ॥

87 मुक्तये यः शिलात्वाय शास्त्रमूचे सचेतसाम् ।
गोतमं तमवेक्ष्यैव यथा वित्थ तथैव सः ॥ नैषधचरित, 17—75 ॥

Supreme.'[88] The aim of the *Mīmānsā* is to examine the nature of religion or *dharma*.

Mīmānsā adopts the theory of plurality of selves to account for the variety in nature. It believes that all non-living and living forms, whether under bondage or liberated, are true. The universe was neither created nor can be destroyed. It is there and it remains while the material and persons may undergo changes.[89] *Mīmānsā* accepts the infallibility of the *Vedas*, which are emanation of Reality in the form of Cosmic Sound (*Śabda Brahm*) and Vedic hymn are sacred formulae (*Mantras*) with the inherent meaning and power to reveal the truth. *Mīmānsā* earlier aimed at heaven through religion. Later, the aim was set as *'mokṣa'/'apvara'* or salvation. Salvation, according to *Mīmānsā*, is the cessation and absence of pain. Some followers of *Mīmānsa* believe in atomism while some do not. "Atomism," according to Kumaril, "is not an essential part of *Mīmānsā*."[90]

Mīmānsā is a polytheistic philosophy believing in the existence of a host of supernatural beings called *Devas*, popularly known as lesser gods. These lesser gods reside in heaven. As stated above, *Mīmānsā* stresses on religion. It lays emphasis on different kinds of ritualistic practices through which one can qualify for ascent to heaven after death. These practices are mainly composed of religious ceremonies such as *yajña*. *Mīmānsā* is considered an esoteric discipline. The esoteric interpretation of the word *yajña* is the control of the senses and mind for self-realisation. Esoterically, material offerings (*Dravyas*), the senses (*Indriyas*), sense-objects (*Viṣayas*), the vital airs (*Prāṇas*), etc. are the offerings made

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88 अथातो धर्म जिज्ञासा (मीमांसा) ॥ मीमांसासूत्र ॥
अथातो ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा (वेदान्त)

89 न कदाचिदनीदृशं जगत् ॥ श्लोक वार्तिक ॥

90 मीमांसकैश्च नावश्यमिष्यन्ते परमाणवः ॥ श्लोक वार्तिक ॥

into an inner sacrificial fire within the individual. This is called Yoga of Self Control (*Ātmasanyam Yoga*). When the senses are thus subdued, the inner subtle sound is realised. This is the first phase of spiritual growth aimed at by *Mīmānsā* After achieving this stage, one becomes eligible for the second phase i.e. *Uttara Mīmānsā* or *Vedānta* which aims at the realisation of the ultimate reality i.e. the Supreme or '*Brahm.*'

5.6. *Vedānta*

Vedānta literally means 'the end of the *Veda.*' It comprises the doctrines set forth in the closing chapter of the *Veda*s, which are called the *Upaniṣads*. The views expressed in the *Upaniṣad*s also constitute the final aim of the *Veda* or the essence of the *Veda*s. *Vedānta* is considered to be an orthodox Indian philosophy. It was founded by the sage Vyasa. The *Vedānta Sūtra* is also called *Brahm Sūtra.* Out of many, the two important scriptures on *Vedānta* are the *Karma Mīmānsa* of Jaimini, dealing with duties (*dharma*) enjoined by the *Veda*s and rewards attached thereto, and *Uttara Mīmānsa* of *Bādrāyaṇ*, dealing with philosophical and theological views of *Upaniṣad*s.

The word '*Veda*' is derived from the root '*vid*' which means 'to know.' There are four *Vedas* viz. *Ṛgveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda*. *Ṛgveda* is the oldest. It has hymns in praise of gods. It has 10 *maṇḍala*s or sections and 10552 *mantra*s or hymns. *Yajurveda* has 40 sections and 1975 *mantra*s mostly dealing with *yajña*. *Sāmaveda* has 1875 *mantras*; most of the hymns being those derived from *Ṛgveda*. The hymns are melodious and are relatively easy to understand. *Atharvaveda* has 20 sections and 5987 *mantra*s, many of which are derived from the *Ṛgveda*. The four *Vedas* totally contain 20389 *mantra*s. The *Veda*s have generally three parts[91] and each dealing with (i) action which gives details of how to perform a *yajña*, (ii)

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91 कर्मकाण्ड,ज्ञानकाण्ड एवं उपासनाकाण्ड ।

knowledge which explains *ātma* and *paramātma* and related aspects, and (iii) devotion which gives details as to how to worship the God. The *Vedas* have two main sections viz. *Samhitā* or the *Veda* proper and *Brahman* scriptures. *Brahman* scriptures have three parts viz. *Brahman, Āraṇyak,* and *Upaniṣads*. *Brahman* scriptures give details of *yajña*. Main *Brahman* scriptures are *Aitreya, Taittarīya,* and *Ṣaṭpath* among others. Main *Āraṇyak* scriptures are *Aitreya, Śankhayāna, Bṛhdāraṇyaka, Taitreya* and *Tavalkar*.

Upaniṣads are the last parts of the *Veda*. The word '*upaniṣad*' is derived from *upa* (near), *ni* (down) and *sad* (to sit), i.e., sitting down near. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the secret doctrine. Presently, about 108 *Upaniṣads* are available. Main *Upaniṣads* are *Iṣa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍūkya, Taittarīya, Aitreya, Chandogya, Bṛhadaraṇyaka* and *Śvetaśvatar*. As stated earlier, *Upaniṣads*, *Brahm Sūtra* of Badarayan and *Bhagvad Gītā,* the three are collectively called as '*Prasthana Trayi*' of *Vedānta*.

It is generally agreed that the *Vedānta Sūtra* sums up the teachings of *Upaniṣads*. The *Vedānta Sūtra* has four chapters dealing with (i) the theory of *Brahm* as the central reality, (ii) replies to rival theories (*avirodha*), the nature of the soul and related attributes, (iii) the ways and means (*sādhana*) of attaining the knowledge of *Brahm* or *Brahm-Vidyā*, and (iv) the fruits (*phala*) of *Brahm-Vidyā*.

Vedānta believes that the Supreme or the *Brahm* is everywhere. *Brahm* is the reality and ultimate truth. According to the *Vedānta Sūtra*, the *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* of the *Sānkhya* are not independent substances, but modifications of a single reality. The world is unreal and appears so due to nescience. *Brahm* is the truth; the world is unreal (*māyā*); the individual soul (*Jīva*) is *Brahm*; no other (not different)[92].

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92 ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन् मिथ्या; जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।

There are several sub-schools, mostly within *Vedānta*, having divergent views of monism and dualism. These are briefly given below along with the western view on pluralism and monism.

5.7 Pluralism vis-à-vis monism

There are mainly two views that the appearances and reality of the universe comprise either one single entity (and all are its manifestations) or contain several distinct entities. Let us see what broadly the western and Indian philosophical viewpoints are in this regard.

5.7.1 THE WESTERN VIEW OF PLURALISM VIS-À-VIS MONISM

'Pluralism' denotes any metaphysical theory that claims that reality consists of a multiplicity of distinct, fundamental entities. The term was first used by Christian Wolff (1679-1754), and later popularised by William James in *The Will to Believe*. In A *Pluralistic Universe*, William James explains pluralism in the world in terms of the dominance of external relations.

The term 'monism' also was first used by Christian Wolff and applies to any doctrine or theory that claims that all things, no matter how many or of what variety, can be reduced to one unified thing in time, space, or quality. Monistic philosophers include Parmenides, Democritus, Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Hegel, and proponents of contemporary atomic theory. Substantial monists, such as Spinoza, maintain that everything is part of a single substance. Attributive monists maintain that, although there may be many distinct substances, they are all attributes of one type of stuff.

Other doctrines are classified as types of monism. These include *traditional materialism, neutral monism, idealism, and partial monism.*

Traditional materialism is the variety of *monism* which sees that everything is based on the material and physical. Hobbes subscribed to this view.

Neutral monism, a doctrine of Hume, Russell and Mach, denies that reality is based in neither the physical nor the mental, but rather in one particular kind of substance that can be classified as neutral stuff. Phenomenalism, in most instances, is classified under neutral monism.

Idealism is the form of *monism*, which maintains that everything is based on the mental. The two philosophers most closely associated with *idealism* were Berkeley and Hegel, the latter's version bases everything in and on the World Spirit.

Partial monism holds that if there are many realms of being, there is still only one substance within one of the realms upon which everything is based. Descartes is a half-subscriber to this form of *monism*; he accepted this theory as far as the matter was concerned, but rejected it when it was applied to the mind.

As per the Pre-Socratic Ionian philosophy, the universe is composed of the four primaries: air, water, fire, and earth. Thus, the origin of all things could be traced back to one or a combination of two or more of these primaries. Anaxagoras, however, held that the number of substances in the universe was infinitely great and cannot be numbered.

Aristotle is sometimes classified as a pluralist given his view that reality is composed of individual substances (material objects with an essence). Aristotle's pyramidal scheme also brings out a graded hierarchy of nature from formless matter to matterless form.

Matterless Form



Higher Beings



Man



Animals



Plants



Nature



Formless Matter

At the top, there is actualised matterless form and at the bottom of this graded system is pure matter without form. Those at the lower rung are actualising themselves to go to higher rungs. At the top of this hierarchical order, there is actuality but no potentiality. At the base of the graded scale, there is potentiality but hardly any actuality. The matterless form is also called pure activity or *actus purus*.

Leibniz held that all things are made up of monads i.e. elemental substances whose principal attribute is perception. They are infinite in number, and change according to their proximity with one another. As they perceive their neighbouring monads, and change accordingly, they compose the things we use such as tables and chairs. Herbart described his ontology as a "pluralistic realism." This means that reality is made up of simple qualitative units for which he gave the name "reals." These join together in synthesis that lead to the world we perceive.

Bertrand Russell's account of logical atomism was pluralistic insofar as it was founded on the common sense belief that there are many separate things. Later abandoning the view of logical atomism, Russell still held to pluralism by giving his conviction that the universe lacked a continuity and orderliness.

Sri Aurobindo also states about a succession starting from physical forms upto the graded series of Matter, Life, Man and Spirit.[93]

5.7.2 THE INDIAN VIEW OF PLURALISM VIS-À-VIS MONISM

The Indian philosophy mostly believes either in *monism* (or more correctly in non-dualism), dualism or pluralism of the *Jīva/ātma* and *Brahm.*

An important statement (*mantra*) of *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (3-5-1) (as also appearing in the same form in *Śvetaśvatar Upaniṣad* (4-6) and also in *Ṛgveda*) is debated to mean either monism or dualism[94]. It states: 'Two birds which are under the bond of friendship/intimacy live together on the same tree. One of them tastes the fruits (of action) whereas the other bird does not taste it but keeps on watching.'

The two birds are taken as the self (*'jīvatma'*) and the supreme (*paramātma*). Some believe the two birds to be the self and the bystander/witness/observer (*'sākṣi'*). Some believe that the same entity can perform the two roles. A part of you acts and another

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93 Sri Aurobindo. *"The Life Divine."* Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publi. Deptt., Pondicherry. p. 791.

94 द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया, समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

॥ मुण्डकोपनिषद्, तृतीय मुण्डक, प्रथम खण्ड, 1 ॥

॥ श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्, अध्याय 4--6 ॥

(ऋग्वेद, मण्डल 1/सूक्त 164/20 एवं अथर्ववेद, काण्ड 9/सूक्त 14/20 में भी यह मंत्र इसी रुप में आया है।)

part of you just observes. Some take them as two different identities i.e. the self and the Supreme/God. These are interpreted differently to mean either monism/non-dualism or dualism.

In the context of Indian schools, it would be interesting to understand the term 'monadism.' It is convenient to use 'monadism' to mean the doctrine of plurality of eternal selves, and 'pluralism' to mean the doctrine of plurality of distinct substances or events in nature.[95] It would, then, be seen that several of the orthodox schools/sub-schools, especially of *Vedānta* and within that of *Advaita*, believe in monadism rather than in dualism.

Several combinations and modifications of dualism and non-dualism exist in India. It would not be possible to detail all these. Salient features of some important ones are, however, given below.

5.7.2.1 The non-dualism or *'Advaita Vedānta'* of Ādi Śankarācārya (8th Century A.D; Ādi Śankarācārya lived only for 32 years)

Śankarācārya belonged to a simple but learned family of *Nambūdiri* sect of *Brahmins* of Malabar. He was born at Kaladi village on the west coast of Indian peninsula i.e. in Kerala. He renounced the worldly pleasure and became *sanyāsi* at an early age. Early in his youth, he went to a Vedic school in Omkareshwara at the bank of river Narmada near Indore in Central India. The Vedic school was presided over by Govindācārya, the desciple of Gaudpada, the first systematic exponent of the *Advaita Vedānta.* He travelled from place to place and had discussions and arguments with religious leaders of other schools of thought, notably Kumarila and Maṇḍana Misra; the latter became Śankarācārya's disciple under the name

95 Paul Edwards (Editor-in-Chief). 1967. *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.* Vol. IV. *Indian Philosophy.* The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, NY & Collier-Macmillan Ltd., London. Pp. 156, and also 155-169.

Sureśwarācārya. The incidence of his entering the dead body of Amaruka shows that Śankarācārya was an adept in yogic practices. He established four religious centres, or *Maths* viz. (i) *Sringerī* near Mysore, (ii) *Purī* in the east, (iii) *Dwārakā* in the west, and (iv) *Badrināth* in the north of India, in the Himalayas. Śankarāchārya embodied austere intellectualism and propounded what is called 'the Advaitism of Śankarācārya,' which in the words of Radhākrishnan[96] is "a system of great speculative daring and a logical subtlety." The central texts of the school are Sankarācārya's commentaries on; (i) the principal *Upaniṣads*, (ii) *Bhagavad Gītā*, and (iii) the *Vedānta Sūtra*. His *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi*, *Upadeśasahstri* and many popular hymns bring about general position of the school and expose quality of his analysis, its force, logic, feeling and at times the sense of humour as well.

Śankarācārya's view is representative of the main tendency of the *Upaniṣads*. However, the matter is not so simple in regard to *Vedānta Sūtra*. According to the Hindu theory of interpretation, there are six well-known tests to ascertain the teaching of a work or scripture. These are: (i) *upakarma* or commencement and *upasanhāra* or conclusion, (ii) *abhyāsa* or reiteration, (iii) *apūrvata* or novelty, (iv) *phala* or fruit, (v) *arthavāda* or explanatory statements, and (vi) *upapatti* or illustration. In view of these, Śankara's non-dualism endorses that of Badrayan. Also, *Vedānta Sūtra* is largely accepted to have summed up the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*.

The non-dualism of Ādi Śankarācārya believes that the self/soul is the *Brahm* and the two are not different. *Brahm* is the only and ultimate truth and the universe is false.[97] The world so appears due to super-imposition and nescience. The world is an appearance. It may in some way indicate towards reality but

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96 Radhakrishnan. 1923 (Indian Edition 1940, Tenth Impression, 1977). *Indian Philosophy* – Volume 2. Muirhead Library of Philosophy. Blackie & Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Pp. 1-807. (p.445-658 in particular).

97 ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन् मिथ्या; जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।

cannot be the reality. It is due to nescience that we see *Jīva* and the universe as things different from *Brahm*. The *māyā* doctrine of Śankaracharya is an intelligible commentary on and development of the view of *Upaniṣads*.[98] The word *avidya* (nescience) occurs in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* and also in *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*.[99] The concept of nescience plays a great part in Śankarācārya's non-dualism. Eradication of nescience is liberation and salvation.

5.7.2.2 A special form of non-dualism or qualified non-dualism or the theism or *viśiṣṭa-advaita* of Rāmānujacārya

Ramānuja was born in Sriperumbudur in 1017 A.D. He had a long life of 120 years and died in 1137 A.D. He had his education and exposure to *Vedānta* from Yadavaprakāsh but separated from him owing to differences in views. He finally settled down at Srirangam. With the help of his disciple Kurattalvar, Ramanuja composed original literature and also commentaries on leading scriptures. His exposition of the *Brahm Sūtra* got approval and great acceptance by Vaishnavas, devotee of Lord *Viṣṇu*, and it became the commentary or Śri *Bhāṣya* for the Vaishnavas.

The *Viśiṣṭa advaita* of Rāmānujacārya takes evidence from the perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and scriptures (*āgama*) as valid sources of knowledge. Yogic perception is not admitted as an independent source of knowledge by the followers of Rāmānuja as it is not different from sense perception.[100] For cause

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98 *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, ii.4.2; Chhan. viii. 3. I-3 and i.I.10; *Praśna.*, i, I6. The prayer of the *Bṛhadāraṇyakaopaniṣad* i.e. ... "lead us from non-being to being, from darkness to light, from death to immortality," suggests the *māyā* theory.

99 *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, ii.4 and 5; also in *Muṇḍakopinaṣad.*, ii.I.10.

100 Radhakrishnan. 1923 (Indian Edition 1940, Tenth Impression, 1977). *Indian Philosophy – Volume 2.* Muirhead Library of Philosophy. Blackie & Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Pp. 1-807. (p. 678 in particular).

and substance, Rāmānuja adopts the theory of *Satkāryavad.* Every effect implies a pre-existent material cause. Alteration of state is the meaning of causation.

It believes that there are three elements, living, non-living and God.[101] God is special from the two. The God and *Brahm* are one and the same. These three viz. living, non-living and the God collectively called *Brahm.* Though the world of matter and the individual souls have a real existence of their own, still neither of them is essentially the same as the *Brahm.* The *Brahm* is eternally free from all imperfection whereas the matter is unconscious and the individual souls are subject to ignorance and suffering.

There are three classes of self or *jīva* viz. (i) eternal (*nitya*) who dwell in heaven (*Vaikuṇṭha*), enjoying bliss and are free from *karma* and *prakṛti,* (ii) the freed (*mukta*) who achieve liberation through their wisdom, virtue and devotion, and (iii) the bound (*baddha*) who are bound to the worldly affairs (*sansāra*) owing to their ignorance and selfishness. The souls wandering in *'sansār'* are again diṣtinguished into four classes viz. (a) celestial/super-human, (ii) human, (c) animal, and (d) stationary (*sthavar*). All souls are of same kind and their distinctions are due to the bodies with which they are associated. Caste differences are also wrongly perceived due to body only as the souls are of one kind.

Rāmānuja analyses the relation of the world to God. He argues that God is indeed real and independent but the souls of the world are also real though their reality is utterly dependent on that of God. The self (*jīva*) is dependent on the God (*Īśvara*) but is not different from the God. The universe is true (and not appearance only). Rāmānuja vigorously protests against the doctrine of *maya* and the phenomenality of the world. He believes in a spiritual principle as the basis of the world; the world is not an illusion but is real. Rāmānuja puts forward seven

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101 चित्, अचित एवं चिदचिद् विशिष्ट ।

objections (*sapta anupapatti*) against the *Vedānta* doctrine of nescience (*avidya*). Mainly, these are:

1. ***Āśraya anupapatti*:** What is the seat (shelter or *āśraya*) of nescience? It cannot be the *Brahm* who is full of perfection. It cannot be the individual who is the product of nescience.

2. ***Tirodhana anupapatti*:** Nescience cannot conceal *Brahm* whose nature is self-luminosity.

3. ***Svarūpa anupapatti*:** The nature (*svarūpa*) of nescience cannot be logically determined. Is it *sat* (existing, real) or *asat* (not existing)? It is neither real nor unreal.

4. ***Anirvacanīyatva anupapatti*:** To say that a thing is indefinable (*anirvacanīya*) is illogical.

5. ***Pramāṇa anupapatti*:** There is no evidence (*Pramāṇa*) to support existence of nescience. No means of knowledge testifies to its existence. Neither perception nor inference nor revelation establishes it.

6. ***Nivartaka anupapatti*:** If cessation (*nivartana*) of nescience takes place by means of the knowledge of *Brahm* that is devoid of attributes and qualities, then it cannot take place, since such knowledge is impossible.

7. ***Nivṛtya anupapatti*:** The abolition (*nivṛtti*) of nescience, which is a concrete reality, cannot be brought about by abstract knowledge.

There are counter-arguments in reply to the seven objections of Rāmānuja. It is argued that nescience is not a concrete reality as Rāmānuja has taken it for objection. It is an illusion. Radhakrishnan[102] states, "the real *avidya* (nescience) to which we

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102 Radhakrishnan. 1923 (Indian Edition 1940, Tenth Impression, 1977). *Indian Philosophy – Volume 2.* Muirhead Library of Philosophy. Blackie & Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Pp. 1-807. (p. 702 in particular).

are the victims, is that power of illusion which makes us believe that we ourselves and the world are independent of *Brahm*."

In *viśiṣṭa advaita*, non-dualism component is primary whereas the dualism component is secondary. Both are not different from each other but both are true and existent. The action (*karmavāda*) and freedom of will (*sankalpa svātantrya*) of the living beings lead to the functioning of the universe.

Rāmānuja promoted theism. There is emphasis on devotion (*bhakti*) by the theistic systems, including the four Vaishnava schools viz. (i) *Śrīsampradāya* (*viśiṣta advaita*) of Rāmānuja, (ii) *Brahmasampradāya* (*'dvaita'*) of Madhva (*Ānandtīrtha*), (iii) *Rudrasampradāya* (*śuddhadvaita*) of Vishnuswami and Vallabhācārya, and (iv) *Sanakādisampradāya* (*dvaitādvaita*) of Nimbarka. Despite doctrinal differences, these have similar view in rejecting the conception of *māyā*, in regarding God as personal, the soul possessing inalienable individuality, and the soul finding its true-being not in an absorption in the Supreme but in fellowship with Him.

Salvation, according to Rāmānuja, is not the disappearance of the self but its release from the limitations. The released soul attains the nature of God, though it does not identify with Him. It desires nothing else, and so has no chance of returning to the world (*sansāra*). The state of release means the unimpeded manifestation of the natural qualities of intelligence and bliss. There is no *jīvan mukti*. One attains the fellowship with God after exhausting all *karma* and throwing-off the physical body. The released souls have all the perfections of the Supreme, except that; (i) they are atomic in size while the supreme spirit is all-pervading, and (ii) the soul can enter into several bodies and experience different worlds created by God but it has no power over the creative movements of the world which exclusively belong to *Brahm*. There are two classes of the released souls: (i) those who are intent on service to God on earth and so do in

heaven, and (ii) those (*kevalins*) who are altogether isolated from the rest, since they achieved their end by constant meditation on the real nature of their soul. The picture of heaven is not much different from the usual impression.

5.7.2.3 Dualism of Mādhvācārya (1197-1276)

Mādhava was born in the year 1197 (some believe in the year 1199) in a village near Udipi in South Canara. He is also known as *Pūrṇapragya* and *Ānandatīrtha*.

The dualism of Mādhvācārya accepts the three sources of knowledge viz. perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*) and scriptural testimony (*āgama*). It has many points in common with *viśiṣṭa advaita* of Rāmānuja. It believes that the entities are different from each other. The God (*Īśvara*), the self/living (*jīva*) and the rest of the universe (*prakṛti*) are the elements. The universe is true. In fact, each of these three are true and different from each other.

Mādhava stands for unqualified dualism. The three eternal entities viz. God, soul and the world are fundamentally different from one another. All these are eternal and real but the latter two are subordinate to God and dependent on him. Independent (*svatantra*) reality is the *Brahm*, the *Absolute Creator* of the world. Mādhava insists on the five great distinctions of (i) God and the individual soul, (ii) God and the matter, (iii) the individual soul and the matter, (iv) one soul and another, and (v) one part of matter and another.

5.7.2.4 Dualistic non-dualism of Nimbārkācārya (middle of 14th century A.D.)

Nimbārka was a Telugu *Brāhm*in who lived some time after Ramanuja and prior to Madhava, about the 11th century A.D. He preached Vaishnava faith. His theory is called dualistic non-dualism (*dvaitadvaita*).

The dualism-non-dualism of Nimbārkācārya believes that there are three elements; living (*Jīva, cit*), non-living (*jagat, acit*) and God (*Īśvara'*).[103] The first two are not the body proper of the God and are different from the God. These, however, are power-forms and, thus, parts of God. While both *jīva* and *Īśvara* are self-conscious, the former is limited, while the latter is not. The number of *jīva* is infinite, though they all are sustained by the supreme spirit.

Nimbārka criticises the illusion (*vivarta*) theory of the world and states that the world is real and is a manifestation (*pariṇāma*) of what is contained subtly in the nature of God.

Both differences and non-differences are real. The soul and the world are different from *Brahm* since they possess natures and attributes different from those of *Brahm*. They are not different since they depend absolutely on *Brahm* and cannot exist by themselves. Thus, both dualism and non-dualism are correct.

Nimbārka (and Keshav) refute the attributeless and predicateless nature of *Brahm*. *Brahm* has good and auspicious qualities. The supreme spirit is identified with *Kṛṣṇa*. It possesses all auspicious qualities and is exempt from the faults of egoism, ignorance, passion and attachment. He manifests himself in the incarnations (*avatāra*s). He is the material and efficient cause of the universe.

The pure nature of *jīva* is obscured by its *karma*, which is the result of nescience (*avidyā*). Nescience is beginningless, yet it can be terminated through the grace of God. Complete submission (*prapatti*) is the way to deliverance. Those having complete submission are led to devoutness by God and through devotion (*bhakti*) to realisation of God (*Brahm sākṣātkār*). *Bhakti* is not meditation or *upāsanā*, but love and devotion.

Rāmānuja regards the individual souls (*cit*) and the world (*acit*) as the attributes (*viśeṣan* or *prakāra*) of *Brahm* and this view

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103 चित्, अचित एवं ईश्वर ।

emphasises the non-duality of the Supreme Lord, qualified by the individual souls and the world (*cidacidviśiṣṭa parameśvara advaita*). Nimbarka disputes this view on the ground that the presence of a body does not necessarily imply the possession of attributes.

5.7.2.5. Pure non-dualism of Vallabhācārya (1478-1530)

Vallabha was a Telugu *Brāhm*in who migrated to north and built on the views of Vishnuswāmi (of 13th century A.D.). Vallabha believes not only in *Prasthāna Trayi but also* in *Bhāgvata Purāṇa.* He offers a theistic interpretation of *Veda*s called the 'pure non-dualism' or *śuddha advaita* or *puṣṭi mārga* of *Mahāprabhu* Vallabhācārya. He believes that *Brahm* is one and the only element, which is non-dual. The whole world is real and subtly *Brahm.* The universe and the (living) self are the forms of pure *Brahm* and are not different from the *Brahm.* He admits that *jīva, kāla* (time) and *prakṛti* or *māyā* are real and have eternal existences; these are being of *Brahm* and have no separate existence. Pure *Brahm* is the non-dual element.

Brahm becomes whatever it wills by evolution (*āvirbhāva*) and involution (*tirobhāva*) of its qualities such as bliss and consciousness. When the bliss (*ānanda*) of *Brahm* is obscured, we have the living self (*jīva*). In human and animal souls, the quality of bliss is suppressed. In matter, even consciousness/knowledge is suppressed. The individual soul is not the Supreme clouded by nescience but is itself *Brahm* with one attribute rendered imperceptible. Three kinds of living forms (*jīva*) are distinguished viz. the pure (*śuddha*), the mundane (*sansāri*) and the liberated (*mukta* rather *mukta* from being *sansāri'*) ones. The soul is both the doer and an enjoyer. It is atomic in size, though pervading the whole body by its intelligence as sandalwood makes its presence felt, even where it does not exist, by its scent.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the God and the Supreme (*Pāra-Brahm*). Surrender to God, i.e. utter devotion is the real pursuit of life.

Enjoying surrender, and not the salvation or being one with God, is the bliss and aim of such an utter devotion.

5.7.2.6. Integral *advaitism* (integral non-dualism) of Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)

The integral *advaitism* of Sri Aurobindo[104] believes that the *Brahm* is the Supreme element. The universe is the manifestation of the *Brahm*, the Abosolute and is, therefore, true. The evolution is upward from non-living matter to life, from living to human-beings and from human beings to super human-being.[105] Thus, the evolution has four ascending planes of Matter, Life, Pure mind and Super mind.[106] These planes are integral and non-dual.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first of the Ten Gurus or religious heads of Sikhs, preached of "The One God whose name is Truth."

The recent research in genomics indicates that ultimately the existence and functioning of life forms is dependent on such nucleic acid sequences that are common in most life forms. Also, the whole life belongs to one single gene pool. There is a sort of universality. Although different living and non-living forms exist, the basic units may not be very different.

The results of the Human Genome Project have indicated that there are far too few human genes to account for the complexity of inherited human traits or for the vast inherited differences. The fact is that one gene can give rise to multiple proteins. Alternate splicing of the gene might give rise to multiple variants of the intended proteins. There are certain proteins in spliceosomes and there is a family of chaperones

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104 Sri Aurobindo. *"The Life Divine."* Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publi. Deptt., Pondicherry. pp. 1-1154.

105 जड़ से प्राण से मनस् से अतिमनस की ओर उर्ध्व—गमन।

106 It is to be noted that it is so expressed in *Yajurveda*, 17.67 and also cited by Sri Aurobindo as the source.

proteins, which also lead to this effect of multiple variations of proteins. Further, proteins act alone or in complexes to perform many cellular functions. That explains the diversity even from the same or similar gene combinations and genomes. Genomic synteny shows DNA, genic and even chromosomal similarity between two apparently unrelated species.

It is truly stated that there is one Supreme God who is seen in different ways. This was brought about long back in *Ṛg Veda* as *ekam sad viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti*.'[107] If one truly understands the essence of self, all becomes one. This knowledge ends dualism.[108] Thus, the monism can possibly be explained for the universe as a whole. Yet there is diversity.

5.8 Prominent unorthodox schools/religions

Jainism, one of the oldest religions of the Indian sub-continent, and Buddhism are the two main religions, which can be treated as separate from the Vedic base. Both these religions, and in particular Buddhism, have numerous followers. These do not recognise the existence of a creator God. Jainism believes that the universe has existed and will exist. The entities/substances of the universe, however, do undergo countless changes, but nothing is lost or destroyed. Everything is recycled in another form. Jainism has philosophical theories of non-absolutism or relative pluralism (*anekāntavāda*) and modified scepticism (*syadvāda*). It teaches a path to liberation (*Mokṣa/kaivalya*), which consists of the three jewels (trinity or *ratna-traya*) viz. right perception (*samyak darśan*), right knowledge (*samyak jñāna*) and right conduct (*samyak cāritrya*).

It is worth mentioning that Prince Siddhartha, who eventually attained the enlightenment as 'Budhha the Great' (563 BC to 483

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107 एकं सद् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति ।
108 ज्ञाते द्वैतं न विद्यते ।

BC), was taught *Sānkhya* in his formative years. Fundamental to Buddhist teaching are the non-self doctrine (*anatt*) and that of impermanence (*anicc*).[109] Buddhism asserts that everything is impermanent and devoid of self. It has a doctrine of conditioned co-production (*pratītya-samutpāda*).[110] Some people call/translate it as doctrine of Dependent Origination. The effect is there when cause is there. It postulates that phenomena exist in dependence of their causes and conditions; they do not exist inherently and independently. Buddha taught that "while none exist as independent things, we do exist in inter-relationship with each other; thus, we do not exist in alienation from other sentinent beings and our environment; rather, we exist in profound interdependence..." The principle of temporary and transient nature of all matter was also the core of Buddhism, which was converted into the principle of all being momentary[111] in *Hīnayāna*, a form of Buddhism.

Buddha delivered his first sermon, *Dharma Cakra Pravartana* or turning the wheel of religion, at Sarnath, near Varanasi. In the sermon, he put forth the Middle Path- the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The Middle Path consists in rejecting the two extremes viz. (i) penance and self-punishment, and (ii) hedonism or pleasure-seeking. The four Noble Truths[112] comprise (i) suffering, (ii) desire, (iii) cessation of suffering and (iv) the path towards cessation of suffering.

It is a truth that there is suffering. Suffering causes loss, sickness, pain, failure, the impermanence of pleasure, etc. The main cause of suffering is a desire to possess and control things.

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109 Non-self (अनात्म) and impermanent (अनित्य).

110 प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद जो व्यवहार में सापेक्ष कारणकार्यवाद और परमार्थ में बोधि या निर्वाण है।

111 क्षणभंगवाद। सर्व क्षणिकम्। सर्वम् अनात्म।

112 चार आर्य—सत्यः दुख, दुख—समुदय, दुख—निरोध एवं मार्ग

Sufferings can be made to cease by extinguishing the flame of desire and having liberation.

The three types of trainings or practices are recognised as (i) *śīla* or morality and virtue, (ii) *samādhi* or concentration, and (iii) *prajñā* or discriminative wisdom.

The path to cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path[113] which consists of right-view, -resolve, -speech, -action, -livelihood, -effort, -mindfulness, and -contemplation. Out of these eight, (i) the first two viz. right-view and right resolve refer to discernment or discriminative ability, (ii) the middle three viz. right speech, right action and right livelihood refer to morality and virtue, and (iii) the last three viz., right effort, right mindfulness, and right contemplation are related to concentration.

In India, Buddhism evolved and spread particularly after it was embraced by Emperor Aśoka in the 3rd century B.C. Buddhism is not centred on a god; rather it is a system of philosophy, code of morality and a way of divine life.

Although criticism of one sect by the other has always been there, the mutual respect to each other and religious tolerance is also well documented. Emperor Aśoka ruled when Hindūs and Buddhists were fighting each other. He declared in his famous Edict XII, "The sects of other people deserve reverence ... By acting thus a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of others ... He, who disparages the sects of others, ... inflicts the severest injury on his own sect."

The six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy are the products of sincere and erudite observations of the great sages. They are in general agreement and complement one another but differ in finer details and approaches. All systems accept that the involvement of the Spirit with the forces of Nature (*Prakṛti, Māyā,*

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113 अष्टांगिक मार्ग: सम्यक—दृष्टि,—संकल्प,—वचन,—कर्म,—जीविका,—प्रयास,—स्मृति,—समाधि

manifestations etc.) is the cause for its bondage but each explains this interaction of the Spirit with Nature in a different way. They are, thus, projections of the way of understanding a single supreme truth presented from different angles and planes of consciousness.

Some of the characteristics of one or more of the Indian philosophical schools are thematically discussed in other chapters as well such as those on universe and salvation.

6

Ethics as Seen by Certain Schools of Philosophy

Ethics broadly comprises the conduct and morality. It is the explicit, philosophical reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Since beliefs and values may vary from group to group, there is an acceptance of relativism in ethics. Some believe in absolutism, which is of the belief that there is one and only one truth. Those who espouse absolutism usually believe that they know what this absolute truth is. In ethics, absolutism is usually contrasted to relativism. In ethics, there are two main types of relativism. Descriptive ethical relativism simply claims, as a matter of fact, that different people have different moral beliefs, but it takes no stand on whether those beliefs are valid or not. Normative ethical relativism claims that each culture's (or group's) beliefs are right within that culture, and that it is impossible to validly judge another culture's values from the outside.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan[114] has observed, "It is not easy to know the difference between good and bad men. Ideas may be theoretically divided into good and bad, but not men and women, for each of us contains, in himself or herself, in varying degrees, the good and the bad, the high and the low, the true and the false. Besides, society has queer notions about

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114 Excerpts from S. Radhakrishnan's work titled, *Religion in Transition*.

right and wrong. Unorthodox personal relationships are wrong, while acts involving whole nations in war are right."

The difference between ethics and morality is similar to the difference between musicology and music. Ethics is a conscious stepping back and reflecting on morality, just as musicology is a conscious reflection on music. Morality refers to the first-order beliefs and practices about good and evil by means of which we guide our behaviour, while ethics is the second-order, reflective consideration of our moral beliefs and practices. Morality is universal. Values are a set of upheld beliefs of a person or a group. In practice, we may maintain probity by atoning our actions to our conscience.

History bears out equality and reciprocity as bedrock of ethical thinking. We call this the Golden Rule. It has appeared countless times and in many variations, as an innate expression of what mankind has determined to be the most basic ethical standard.

Even primates display morality and ethics. Dolphins and other marine mammals, chimpanzees, apes, baboons, monkeys and even dogs possess a moral sense, and display many of the behaviours considered basic to most normative human ethical systems. Equality, reciprocity, even altruism, as well as treachery, deceit and manipulation have been detected and recorded among animals. In fact, a kind of "what goes around comes around" golden rule is fundamental to the social relationships of most primates.

Research has shown that the social instinct may be rooted in genes, as is the urge for freedom and self-interest. Man is *both* driven by innate genetic forces *and* is capable of making thoughtful assessments of what is happening. Our biological heritage seems to predispose us to certain ethical standards. Ethologist Frans de Waal states, "The mind does not start out as a *tabula rasa,* but rather as a checklist with spaces allotted to particular types of incoming information." This raises a question as to whether or not the ethical

thought, as expressed by the great minds, is only a rationale for an already cemented genetic ethical sense?

Pretence, dissimulation and manipulation could have originated eons ago as part of the prehistoric mechanism of survival. We shouldn't succumb to the innate craving caused by the manipulative genes, if yet left in us, even after reaching this stage of evolution.

Ethical behaviour is finding the balance between self-interest and group responsibility. Predominant, if not absolute, association of body, mind and spirit with individual, society and nature respectively do exist as tabulated below. Ethical behaviour is moving from individualism to universalism and from body to mind and to spirit. It is largely, but not entirely, learned behaviour in opposition to instincts.

Facet	Features	Associated with
Individual	Aggressive and rampant individualism; self-interest	Body
Human society	People act toward other people	Mind
Nature	People act toward the natural world; letting nature do its thing is considered right.	Spirit

Ethical systems are complex and confusing. The two dominant moral theories are deontological theory, proposed by Immanual Kant, and consequentialist theory, suggested by Bentham and Mill. Kant calls for a categorical imperative to govern ethical decision-making whereas John Stuart Mill advocates the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number. The former presents the universally binding moral imperative whereas the latter states that moral status of any act is calculated in relation to the consequences that follow. A third option has been proposed from the standpoint of virtue ethics (that we will discuss later in this chapter). But, ethics is not

merely an intellectual contest where right and wrong are determined by the best argument or the most skilled debater.

Western philosophy stresses the right of humans to control all of nature and to use it for human benefit in contrast to eastern philosophy that stresses the importance of finding a balanced existence with nature. It is believed that the ancient Egyptian and Indian ideas are basic to eastern philosophy whereas the Hebrew ideas are basic to western philosophy.

In Indian philosophy, there are references to naturalism ('svabhav vad'), to Charvak, to the unorthodox ('nastik'), and to anti-supra-naturalism ('lokayat'). All the materialistic pursuits leading to pleasure have been generally denounced by the philosophers but not unanimously. Charvak, Aristippus of Cyrene (435-366 B.C.), Epicurus (c. 341 B.C.-270 B.C.) and others do not recommend categorical penance, abstinence and asceticism.

6.1 Cārvāk's philosophy

Cārvāk's philosophy is probably the oldest among the various views of materialism. Its period is placed after the *Upaniṣads* and before the advent of Jainism and Buddhism.

Cārvāk believed only in four elements, namely, earth, water, fire and air and did not believe in the element of sky, as it could not be proved. Only that exists which is present, could be seen and felt. He stated that out of the four viz., (i) passion (including sex) or desire (*kāma*), (ii) money or material well-being (*artha*), (iii) religion or good deeds (*dharma*), and (iv) salvation (*mokṣa*), the resultant pleasure is the essence of life.[115] He also believed that death is the salvation.[116]

He believed in the philosophy of 'eat, drink and be merry.' He stated that "till you are alive, live with pleasure and even borrow for pleasure because once the body is turned to ashes after death,

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115 काम एवैकः पुरुषार्थः ।
116 मरणमेवापवर्गः ।

it will not come back again," and you will not have a chance to enjoy.[117] Cārvāk and his followers placed all of their attention on the aims of worldly pleasure. Like Epicureans, however, they also found that pleasure could be maximised and pain could be minimised by detachment. Immortality was found in the name and fame one leaves behind for noble deeds performed.

Believing in pleasure-seeking and rather unrestrained hedonistic[118] philosophy, Cārvāk could not perceive the difference among various pleasures one may get. There could be different types of pleasures. The pleasure as meant to an animal, a scientist, a poet, a philosopher and a saint could be qualitatively different. He unwisely negated the religion, the duty, the values and ethics of life.

It is to be noted that even Vatsayāyan has given due importance to the morality while advocating the enjoyment of bodily pleasure. He stresses on emotional and intellectual pleasure besides mere bodily pleasure. He stated that bodily pleasure and money alone, if not vested in religion/morality, would be the cause of one's fall and all the three viz. bodily pleasure (*Kāmā*), money (*artha*) and religion, good deeds and morality (*dharma*) are needed in combination[119].

6.2 Socrates and Plato

Socrates (about 469-399 B.C.), an Athenian, is considered as one of the most noble and wisest philosophers. For Socrates, virtue was knowledge and knowledge was to be obtained by the dialectical technique that he followed from Zeno. Socrates

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117 यावज्जीवेत् सुखं जीवेद् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत् ।
भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमन कुतः ॥

118 **Hedon** is a term that utilitarians use to designate a unit of pleasure. Its opposite is a dolor, a unit of pain/displeasure. It comes from "hedone", the Greek word for pleasure. **Hedonistic**=of, or pertaining to, pleasure.

119 परस्परानुपघातकं त्रिवर्ग सेवेत । कामसूत्र, अध्याय 2 ॥

himself never takes a position. In *The Apology,* he radically and sceptically claims to know nothing at all except that he knows nothing. Socrates and Plato refer to this method of questioning as *elenchus,* which means something like a "cross-examination." A Socratic dialogue takes the form of question and answer. It is a dialectical style as well. Socrates would argue both sides of a question in order to arrive at a conclusion. Then that conclusion is argued against another assumption and so on. The Socratic *elenchus* eventually gave rise to dialectic, the idea that truth needs to be pursued by modifying one's position through questioning and conflict with opposing ideas.

He had many followers, especially the youth. His wife, Xanthippe, was supposed to have been something of a kind of shrew i.e. a quarrelsome, nagging and ill-tempered woman. Socrates spoke of the "divine sign," a supernatural voice that always prevented him from doing wrong.

In 399 B.C, Socrates was charged with impiety by a jury of five hundred of his fellow citizens. He was charged "as an evil-doer and a curious person, searching into things under the earth and above the heavens; and making the worse appear the better cause, and teaching all this to others." The charges made against Socrates, especially the disbelief in the state's gods, implied un-Athenian activities that would corrupt the young and the state if preached publicly. He was convicted to death by a narrow margin of votes. The jury offered Socrates the chance to pay a small fine for his impiety. But he rejected it. He also rejected the pleas of Plato and other students, who had a boat waiting for him at Piraeus that would take him to freedom. Socrates refused to break the law. He maintained that, being a noble and just citizen, he should accept the judgement of the jury. Having spent his last days conversing with his friends, as Plato relates in his *Phaedo,* Socrates drank the fatal dose of hemlock and died.

The most positive statement that Socrates seems to have made is a definition of virtue (*areté*): "virtue is knowledge." If one knows

the good, one will always do the good. It follows, then, that anyone who does anything wrong doesn't really know what the good is.

Socrates wrote nothing about himself. Our knowledge of Socrates comes to us from numerous dialogues, which Plato (427-347 B.C.) wrote after 399 B.C. Plato is known as the disciple of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle. Plato came from one of the wealthiest and most politically active families in Athens. Plato's actual given name was apparently Aristocles, after his grandfather, but history knows him as Plato. When Socrates died, Plato left Athens, staying first in Megara, but then going on to several other places, including perhaps Cyrene, Italy, Sicily, and even Egypt. Plato returned to Athens and founded a school, known as the 'Academy' from which we get our word, "academic," but which got its name from its location, a grove of trees sacred to the hero Academus—or Hecademus—a mile or so outside the Athenian walls; the site can still be visited in modern Athens.

Plato's greatest and most enduring work was his lengthy dialogue, *The Republic*. This dialogue has often been regarded as Plato's blueprint for a future society of perfection. *The Republic* discusses the education necessary to produce the future society. It is an education that he called as 'paideia,' which refers to the process whereby the physical, mental and spiritual development of the individual is of paramount importance. It is the education of the total individual.

The Republic discusses a number of topics including the nature of justice, statesmanship, ethics and the nature of politics. Politics is not advised to be practised. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates remarks that:

The true champion of justice, if he intends to survive even for a short time, must necessarily confine himself to private life and leave politics alone.

Plato accepted along with his master Socrates that ethics is the highest and greatest study for the philosopher (Republic

6.504, 505, 509). The issue of primary importance was ethics, living a good life. The doctrine of 'pleasure is good' was negated. The greatest criticism of it was that it leads to the bondage of the soul. It was concluded that the pleasure is momentary, based on feeling and desire.

"... every pleasure or pain has a sort of rivet with which it fastens the soul to the body and pins it down and makes it corporeal, accepting as true whatever the body certifies (*Phaedo* 83 d)."

6.3 The Nicomachen ethics of Aristotle

Aristotle was the first, and perhaps the most famous, virtue ethicist of all time. He offered the idea that good was the product of a life of moderation and balance. He called this the "golden mean." But this needs a *priori* assumption, that man is in essence a rational being, and that virtues flow naturally from man's reason.

He maintained that there is a chief good, an end at which all activities aim. This good is *eudaimonia* (flourishing or happiness). It consists of an excellent distinctively human activity, which is "activity of soul exhibiting excellence [virtue]." These distinctively human excellences (or virtues) are states of character, stable dispositions to regulate actions and passions by an ideal of noble conduct. The virtuous person chooses actions as good (noble) in themselves and, in so doing, enjoys his/her noble activity.

Aristotle tells us that the highest thing, which a man can attain, is a life of contemplation of God's goodness. As a matter of ethical life, appetites and passion are to be regulated by reason. Hence, pleasure cannot be the end of man. A rational man tries to actualise himself. Since both appetites and passion are said to be the passive potentiality or feeling, how a man indulging in them can actualise? So feeling cannot be the highest end of the rational man.

Aristotle, therefore, rejects hedonism. He, however, rejects *asceticism* as well. Man is a living body and must live with his

appetites for food, mate, fear, etc. Hence, man has to include these in his rational activity. But, feeling cannot be the guide of life. It only follows the necessity as a *necessary consequence* or *accompaniment* of man's rational life. Therefore, pleasure comes in moral pursuit. The pursuit of the highest rational end of man means the control of passion and appetites by reason, and, this is known as *diagnostic*. Friends, goods, etc. are to accompany but as auxiliary means for a moral life. Thus, Aristotle denies cynicism. As per *deontology* (derived from the Greek word deon meaning duty), in ethics the rightness or wrongness of actions depends on whether they correspond to our duty or not.

Further, there are intensities and states of actions. Aristotle states that in all passions and actions, "there is excess, defect and the intermediate" (1106b 15). "Virtue, then, is a state of character with a choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle the man of practical wisdom would determine it" (1106b 36-8). "Again, the work of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom makes us take the right means" (1144a 5).

Necessary normative ethics may not be easy to comprehend and to teach. Virtue ethics is simple and effective but is too prone to a dangerous relativism to encourage. Virtue ethics may have the propaganda technique. Virtue ethicists argue that if one starts with good intentions and is guided by habitually ingrained and good virtues, the actions that follow will also be good.

Martin Luther once said in a classic statement of virtue ethics: "A good man does good works, but good works do not make a good man." How do we identify this good man in order to know which works are good? What are his character traits?

Virtue ethicists like to call character traits, such as patience, as virtues. The word "character" is derived from the Greek word

'charassein' which means "to mark" or "to engrave" and is associated with the writings of philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. People with good character habitually display good behaviour, and such habits are embedded, or marked on a person. While there may be no specific consensus on a list of desirable traits, there is considerable agreement on desirable moral values that underlie these traits such as sincerity, appreciation of good, living in harmony with people and nature, courage, honesty, compassion, etc. The presence of character trait, *per se*, in a person may, however, not lead to ethical behaviour. For example, the character trait of patience could be present in a parent raising a naughty child but the same trait could be there in a dacoit/looter waiting for his victim. Obviously, the character trait of patience, or any other character trait for that matter, has nothing to do with virtue and has no ethical value whatsoever. The same character traits can equally serve to promote quite despicable ends. Therefore, a character trait has to be essentially associated with an action that can be judged to be good. Further, the actions themselves still need to be evaluated.

There is a need for cultivation of character traits and virtues such as honesty, courage, perseverance, loyalty, caring, civic virtue, justice, respect and responsibility, and trustworthiness. The consensus is that these traits (and others like them) are not innate and must be acquired through teachings and practices in the home and in the schools. Traits or virtues must be transmitted to be internalised i.e. cultivate, internalise and be habitual of these.

Owing to its natural relativism, this virtue system could/will serve any master. This type of conditioning is the wrong way to approach ethics and ethics education. This may not always promote only the noble ends of freedom, democracy and human dignity. It must be based on free choice derived from an internal authority itself rooted in essential human nature and guided by the ability to think critically about the delicate ethical dilemmas of the day. Ethics is, thus, not only about virtues, but about (right) actions also.

There is a difference between the view of Socrates and Aristotle. Socrates holds that man is (wholly) rational. Aristotle holds that man is not only rational but also is an animal driven by appetites and passion. This is what we commonly refer to as 'nature of the beast.' Aristotle is a great supporter of the freedom of will. But the freedom of will has to be regulated. Most voluntary actions, according to him, are moral whereas the involuntary actions compelled from an external agency or motives, or performed under ignorance may not be so. For Aristotle, freedom of will means freedom of choice. The choice of means or an end has to be rational[120].

6.4 Cynicism

Fate and fortune remain external to man and cannot be controlled by man but desire can be. Man is a mixture of appetites and passion, which can be called 'desire.' Man has to suppress his desire. He becomes an ascetic on doing so. In India, we call it *sannyāsa* (renunciation). This attitude in morality is known as **cynicism**. It was really founded by Antisthenes (444—368 B.C.) and was popularised by Diogenes of Sinope. For the cynics, even a good fortune has to be more dreaded than welcomed, for it is precarious in the first instance, and, secondly it is not the reward of our virtuous efforts. Therefore, a virtuous man is he who limits his wants to a minimum. A cynic could live by begging as an 'Indian fakir,' as Russell has put it.

6.5 Cyrenaicism

Socrates had suggested that the end of ethical life is happiness. But he did not define happiness. So Aristippus of Cyrene (435-366 B.C.) held that 'happiness' of his master really means

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120 Many believe that both determinism (predestination) and freedom of will are true. This is called 'compatibilism'. Whether the choice itself is wholly free or is decided by man's psychological determinants, is another aspect. It has been an important part of modern analysis of free actions.

pleasure. Aristippus, laying down the hedonistic standard, stated that the end of ethical striving is pleasure. This is also known as 'Cyrenaicism'. Theodorus is reported to have recommended even stealing and committing adultery if they could go undetected! According to Cyrenaics, "A wise man should not work for the State for it entails much fruitless work and hard labour. It is not reasonable that a wise man should hazard himself for the country, and endanger wisdom for a set of fools."

Later, the Cyrenaics had to admit the place of finer feeling in friendship and family life. But even here, the life of prudence, foresight and intelligence was encouraged for the sake of egoistic pleasure.

Perhaps time was not ripe for cyrenaics to realise that pleasure is not the end of life, but is the consequential result of a good life. This was already shown by the Eudaemonism[121] of Aristotle.

Hegesias, a Cyrenaic, deserves a mention here who became a philosopher of suicide, for he advocated painless death (father of modern euthanasia!) rather than enjoyment of life. Cyrenaicism was later taken up by Stoicism and further by Epicureanism in its fullness.

6.6 Stoicism

Stoicism was founded by Zeno (336-264 B.C.) in Athens about 314 B.C. Zeno was a simple, upright man of friendly disposition. He was full of moral earnestness. Afterwards, the school was looked after by Cleanthes (264-232 B.C.) and really adumbrated by Chrysippus (280-207 B.C.). Later on some Roman thinkers viz., Seneca (3-65 A.D.), Epictetus (c. 60-100 A.D.) and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.) also accepted Stoicism.

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121 Eudaemonia is the word that Aristotle uses for "happiness" or "flourishing." It comes from the Greek word "eu," which means "happy" or "well" or "harmonious," and "daimon," which refers to the individual's spirit.

Stoicism is essentially based in reason. Stoic ethics is based on logic and metaphysics. According to it, the soul at birth is a clean state, a *tabula rasa*. There are no Platonic innate ideas. Knowledge begins with perception and leaves its trace on the soul.

Stoics believed in living in harmony with nature and world citizenship. Human reason is only a spark of the world-reason which is the supreme reality. This world-reason has given rise to the whole universal order.

Man is not only a rational being, but there is something external to him viz. (i) controllables viz. appetites, passion and emotions, and (ii) uncontrollables viz. fortune, riches, poverty, disease, health etc. The appetites etc. are to be annihilated. Therefore, a true wise man should be an ascetic. This is asceticism.

Should we help a man or our friend out of pity? Stoics would say 'no', not out of pity, for 'pity' is a feeling which is external to the rational nature of man.

6.7 Epicureanism

It will be interesting to see what Epicurus (c. 341 B.C.-270 B.C.) believed in and how certain of his views really indicated towards the importance of ethics despite his leaning towards pleasure and happiness.

It is generally believed that the aphorisms of Epicureanism are verbally the same as those of Stoicism. Some prominent ones of these are:

1. The ethical ideal is happiness, which is reduced ultimately for having a serene and calm mind.
2. Live according to nature.
3. Virtue is one (in being guided by reason alone).
4. Materialism.
5. World-citizenship.
6. A life of few desires and wants.
7. An insistence on the necessity of a group of friends.

As the Epicureans held that knowledge is true of sensible things alone, they may be said to be the forerunners of modern positivism.

For Aristippus, pleasure of the body and of the moment is what man should seek. The Epicureans developed this Cyrenaicism of Aristippus. They accepted that man seeks pleasure and avoids pain, almost instinctively. But the Epicureans differ from Aristippus as they take pleasure in a different way. For them, the pleasure of the moment or transitory pleasure should be set aside in favour of more enduring pleasure for life as a whole.

Mental pleasure is more enduring than bodily pleasure. Bodily pleasure is likely to be followed by pain more frequently than mental pleasure. Further, without the participation of mind, even the bodily pleasure cannot be enjoyed. Feasibly, it is more desirable to avoid pain instead of trying to attain positive pleasure. A wise man, according to the Epicureans, is one who enjoys *imperturbability* (ataraxia). One should try independence of the world, for the external world cannot be controlled. But happiness within one's own self can be attained. Man can become master of his own self by the control of his emotions or passions i.e. by attaining apathy. This is the state of painless rest, of mental equipoise [122] and serenity.[123]

Some wants are indispensable even for a wise man. Those are natural and inevitable, e.g. appetite for food, rest and sleep. A wise man can enjoy some of them, if their satisfaction does not disturb the equanimity of his mind. A wise man is he whose wants are few.

The Epicureans loved the aesthetic refinement of life. This life meant refined conversation between friends, but this did not mean strenuous scientific pursuits. What they cared for was peace of mind, undisturbed by any fear of death, fate or gods.

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122 स्थितिप्रज्ञता

123 Y. Masih 1994. A critical history of western philosophy. Motilal Banarasidass Publi. Pvt. Ltd., Delhi.

They calmed the minds of those who feared the punishment for their (mis) deeds after death by denying the survival of man after death. They stated, 'When we are, death is not; and where death comes, there we are not.' Man and his soul are formed by the combination of atoms. At the time of death, all atoms are dissolved and so there can be no survival. So there can be no fear of death and the vicissitudes of after-life.

They agreed that there are gods. They are like human beings. They eat and drink without bothering about man. Hence, they neither reward nor punish man. Every god is really a projection of what a thinker thinks of being an ideal man; so the gods of the Epicureans are just what they themselves desire to be.

They taught the doctrine of free will. 'Man is not working under any Fate,' according to the Epicureans. Man, by virtue of his own free will, can become the master of his own fate and can make his life happy.

Epicureans could not maintain any commitment to social or public life. Their atomistic materialism and hedonistic ethics could have supported only individualism. They held the importance of friendship, which should be maintained, on the utilitarian ground of self-protection and mutual helpfulness. The Epicurean theory, thus, stands in sharp contrast of Aristotle and Plato with regard to social and political morality. For Aristotle, 'one's moral life becomes complete only by participating in the performance of duty in the State." In contrast, for the Epicureans, "social and political life is based on expediency and utility." Their typical statement is:

"It is not our business to work for crowns ..., but to enjoy ourselves in good eating and drinking."

In contrary to this, the modern philosophers recognise social aspects. For example, for Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924), "morality is not a matter of good will alone, but is a social concern."

His doctrine of 'Station and its duties' renders precise the social ethics of earlier philosophers like G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831).

For Immanuel Kant, all of morality depended on a single categorical imperative i.e. an unconditional command. One version of that imperative was, "Always act in such a way that the maxim of your action can be willed as a universal law." "Maxim," according to Kant, "is the *subjective rule* that an individual uses in making a decision."

6.8 Utopian philosophy

All human beings are dreaming of a better world. The word 'utopia' denotes the best life attainable. But then every person may have his own unique vision of utopia. Hence, an agreeable description of utopia could be, "the ability for each person to live in his own (but rational) vision of bliss." Human beings comprise both a tangible physical state (body) and an intangible mental state (mind). Therefore, the way to achieve utopia is to find technologies and methods that fully satisfy both these states of human existence. With genetic engineering (and biotechnology), chemical manipulation, and frontline technologies (which even go to terra-farming, artificial smarter-than-human intelligence and man-machine singularity[124]), we can enhance both the physical and mental state of existence. We have to move towards being a more and more knowledge-intensive society. With the right new knowledge, humanity can have infinite provision for all tangible and intangible needs and wants for existence. It can, thereby, have utopia. It is estimated that less than 2 per cent of the current global productivity is being devoted to research and development. There is a need to invest much more. This will be an investment in the future of humanity so as to make utopia of a good life a reality for all.

The difference in the perception of utopia may, however, be so different that it may lead to chaos, disorder and even

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124 Kurzweil, Raymond.2005. *The Singularity is Near-When Humans Transcend Biology*. New York: Viking, ISBN 0-670-03384-7. Pp. 1-654.

uncertainty of the existence of human beings. This has been imagined, longed for and dreaded of as well.[125] The good life has, therefore, to be decided by reason rather than by short-living pleasure, where the physical being is exceeded by the mental, emotional and spiritual being.

6.9 General values and ethics[126]

As stated earlier, there is relativism according to which each culture's (or group's) beliefs are right within that culture, and that it is impossible to validly judge another culture's values from the outside.

Several groups have standardized their own ethics. Agencies like United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) have identified a set of core values. UNDP had identified commitment, competence, responsiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability and consensus orientation to the goals and strategy of an organization. Besides organization, the issues relating to individual identity and behaviour and those relating to working with groups in the organization and finally the issues relating to the role of organization in the society are important.

The USDA strategic plan (1997-2002) lists following values:

Accountability	We are responsible to the public
Appreciation	We respect one another and value everyone's contribution
Cooperation	We work with others to most effectively use available knowledge, resources and technologies
Creativity	We nurture and reward creativity
Diversity	We encourage workforce diversity

125 B.E. Skinner in his "Walden Two" has gone far from Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" and has given the long-term aim of 'Utopia' as the design of personalities.

126 सामान्य आचारनीति ।

Global perspective	We encourage and promote an international perspective and global collaboration on agricultural issues
Integrity	We are committed to the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct
Leadership	We should promote leadership in information and agricultural science
Objectivity	We are proud of our scientific objectivity and will continue to provide unbiased information
Partnerships	We should encourage partnerships with other organizations and individuals
Quality	We are dedicated to the highest standards of quality in agricultural research and information dissemination
Relevance	We respond to the needs of the agricultural community and all of society
Service	We should listen to our customers, both internal and external, and provide them with high quality scientific research, technologies and information
Sharing	We are committed to share information broadly in timely fashion
Strategy	We should shape the future by strategically positioning our resources and capabilities
Teamwork	We support teams that approach problems holistically by looking at the total implications of their work

The above example is in case of a sector i.e. agricultural research. The values and ethics differ from group to group. Nevertheless, certain general values and ethics have been commonly accepted. The Indian scriptures have more often than not identified and advocated certain general ethics. Some of the important ones are given below.

Let us be committed to the values.

Lead a balanced life. Try to achieve the golden mean. Excess of even a beneficial element may lead to trouble. It has to be balanced with other beneficial elements. Balance the character traits in you. Further, balance the actions and intensities of these character traits.

Respect the nature including all forms of life. Respect all the creatures including all human beings, irrespective of caste, colour, creed and status. They are not to be taken lightly. They are not playthings. You are not superior to them or they are not inferior to you. They are as much children of the universe as you are.

Believe in reciprocity and mutual respect.[127] Reciprocity means "Do unto others what you want others to do unto you."[128]

We should deal with the issues rather than with the persons.

Think before speaking. Do not speak without having authority on the subject and the authority to speak. Have control on your speech. Many problems and even wars like that of *Mahābhārata* have started because of irresponsible, ridiculous and uncontrolled speech. Do not indulge in frolicsome and frivolous talk. Do not use harsh and negative words. The same intent can be imported using good and positive words. As far as possible, speak truthfully,[129] softly and sweetly. If you do not agree with anybody on certain points, you should express it carefully so that it is limited to that point only and the message is not taken as general denial of the other person's point of view. One may start with appreciating what has been put forth by the other and then express the difference of opinion on a particular point. Your being right does not empower you to be arrogant. The truth does not need the prop and stilts of over-emphasis. You can be firm without being impolite. You do not have to be too loud. You can communicate loudly through your deeds. Soft-skills enhance the effectiveness of communication but the over-use of soft skills is to be dissuaded. You should speak to express rather than to impress. The message or the content itself should be basically right, strong and desirably succinct. It should come from the heart. Practice silence whenever feasible. There are several saints who do not speak at all and yet carry out human

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127 आत्मनः प्रतिकूलानि परेषां न समाचरेत ।

128 From Bible.

129 सत्यं ब्रूयात प्रियं ब्रूयात न ब्रूयात सत्यमप्रियं ।

welfare. Their mere presence inculcates positive and noble thinking in others.

Internalize the abundance mentality.[130] Abundance mentality is our thinking that there is plenty out there for everybody. This flows out of a deep sense of personal worth and security. More people, less articles, less time to secure your share etc. are the tests of abundance mentality. It is not true that you will get an article only if the other person does not get it. Do not run after, grab and snatch things whether in a buffet or a gathering in a temple. Do not classify those things as rare that are not. Do not resort to hasty approach even for rare things. Do not follow inappropriate means to achieve position, wealth or fame fast. Some people, not having abundance mentality, make this worthless haste of efforts a habit. They practise it even for petty possessions. They are the people who can be easily lured by others. They grab more than that they can utilise. They do not practise non-covetousness.[131] They accumulate more than what they actually need. They have weakness for so many things whereas weakness for even a single object or matter is enough for the downfall of a person.

Accept your shortcomings, faults and errors. Do not hide or cover them unnecessarily. Do not have pretence. Acceptance of a deficiency is the first step towards improvement. It will help you evolve further. Do not indulge in the hypocrisy, pretence and falsehood. As Socrates states, "The greatest way to live with honour in this world is to be what we pretend to be."

Have endurance (*titikṣā*[132]). Enhance your tolerance. Understand and rationalise others' behaviour. Put yourself in

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130 Covey, Stephen, R. 1992. *Principle-Centred Leadership*. Pocket Books - An Imprint of Simon & Schuster U.K. Ltd. pp. 1-332.

131 They do not follow *'aparigraha'* (अपरिग्रह).

132 तितिक्षा ।

their shoes. Seek first to understand others and, then only, you have the right to be understood by others.

Have mental equipoise in the ups and downs of life. Sudden fortune and sudden misfortune both are to be dreaded.

The pragmatic aspect of ethics and ethical relativism cannot be ignored. It may not always be possible to follow idealism although, as it means, belief in and pursuit of perfection may be continued as an attainable goal. However, it is always possible to have and follow ideology, a system of social beliefs and values that can form the basis of a social, economic or political philosophy or programme to ensure ethical disposition and thereby equality and reciprocity among mankind.

7

The 'Initial Capital,' Rebirth and Innateness

Let us examine as to whether or not there could be some imprint, innate ideas and some natural disposition in human beings, which could be inborn, natural and probably learnt over several births. But before that let us see what some philosophers say about rebirth and transmigration of soul.

7.1. Transmigration of the soul and rebirth

Even the Western philosophers such as Empedocles (490-430 B.C.), Plato (428-347 B.C.; *Phaedo* 85e sq, 92 sq) and Plotinus (205-270 A.D.) believed in immortality and transmigration of soul. According to Empedocles, "There are some people who through purification in many incarnations become sinless and enjoy immortal bliss in the company of gods." Plato believed in 'transmigration' of soul from one body to another in different births/rebirths, till the soul gets the vision of the good and learns to shed off the elements of the body by contemplating on the idea of good (*Meno* 81c).

Exactly as stated in the *Gītā* (2-22 and 27),[133] Plato maintains that the soul keeps on changing its body in its

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133 वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥
॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 2—22 ॥

countless rebirths (*Phaedo* 87d). The existence of rebirth and gradual evolution using the body is stated in several *Upaniṣadic* verses.[134]

The Dionysan cult of mystery is said to have been reformed by Orpheus. The essentials of Orphism have also a marked kinship with Indian thought in this regard. It is stated that Plotinus was greatly influenced by Indian sages whom he met in Persia. Plotinus maintains not only what is said above in essence but maintains even the ontology of non-duality or '*advaitism*.'

A relatively modern discussion of rebirth is that by Sri Aurobindo[135] which, nevertheless, is based on *Vedānta*. Rebirth presupposes two essential things. First, there is a realisation of consciousness of the Self/Soul in an evolutionary body. Second, there is an incomplete being that evolves or has potential to evolve using the evolutionary medium i.e. body/form to become eventually the Spirit (in an attempt or in a succession).

Even the two biological entities having the same genetic endowment can develop differently in regard to their physical, mental and other capabilities. This is what happens to even the identical twins when separated quite early in their life. There is no surprise because the phenotype, total personality, capabilities and responses are the result of an interaction between the genotype and the environment, the latter being different for the two twins. Yet, to most of us they appear as, and in fact are largely, the same. On the other hand, leaving apart the twins, some people allow even the similar and genetically different individuals to pass as the reincarnated ones owing to their belief,

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जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 2—27 ॥

134 *Śvetaśvatar Upaniṣad*, V,11-12.

135 Sri Aurobindo. "*The Life Divine.*" Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publi. Deptt., Pondicherry. pp. 773-796.

faith and psyche. Some individuals are basically the result of fusion of gametes being drawn from the same, and probably narrow, genetic pool on the population or group basis. It is left to nature to produce an organism with genotype somewhat similar and yet different, and not the same, to one of the related elder. Thanks to the advances in science, in some cases even the same gamete replicated in laboratory may be used to form a zygote. All these results may also be taken as rebirth. Is one (and his DNA) not preserved in the gene pool to have a chance of being somewhat repeated in future? Besides living in gene pools, DNA storage has already started. Nature has its own surprises. I have heard people exclaiming, "Oh! He looks like his father." Several of my friends have said, "My son has almost the same handwriting as that of mine." It is only a part of you that has got the rebirth. Who can deny that? But this is not what is commonly understood by rebirth. It is understood today that even the clone to be produced through biotechnology will not have the same personality *in toto* owing to a different environmental exposure. It may behave differently and yet be a form of rebirth.

According to Groucho Marx, life is a whim of several billion cells to be you for a while. Francis Crick once stated, "In the fullness of time, educated people will believe there is no soul independent of the body, and hence no life after death." There are reports of 'out-of-the body' experiences and also that a person remembered incidents of his previous birth.[136] Argument of dissociation of feeling and sentience with the physical parts of the body, such as brain, and similar arguments have been put forward to prove a discrete and unconnected existence of the mind and, thus, the existence of soul.[137] Experts have attempted to analyse the truth of certain reported rebirths where the person

136 B.K. Jagdish Chander. 1998. *Eternal Drama of Souls, Matter and God: Part-I Souls*. Prajapita Brahma Kumariś Ishwariya Vishva-Vidyalaya, Pandava Bhavan, Mount Abu, Rajasthan. Pp. 1-268.

137 Ibid. pp. 188-197.

concerned had some memory of the past birth. There are books regarding it. The results are largely inconclusive.

7.2. Facts and ideas

Before looking into innateness of ideas, it is important to understand the difference between facts and ideas. Facts and ideas are related and yet are distinct. A fact is individual, an idea is universal; a fact is substantial, an idea is adjectival; a fact is self-existent, an idea is symbolical.[138] We have already attempted to differentiate between information, knowledge and wisdom in Chapter 3, i.e. 'Religion and Philosophy' of this book.

7.3. The innateness (of ideas)

There is a deep-seated desire in human nature for truth, and for rational justification of our best instincts.[139] There is a natural disposition in man to believe or at least to know about the Supreme. The idea of God must be innate.

Innate potentials in the form of (God-) gifts and talents are widely believed to contribute to high attainments in various areas of expertise. Some people have examined findings from a number of sources that appear to either support or contradict that viewpoint, and have considered alternative causes of exceptional abilities. They found that there is no firm evidence for the existence of the phenomena having the innate gifts and talents. The outcomes commonly attributed to the effects of innate gifts and talents could be largely accounted for in terms of alternative causes of high abilities such as practice etc. But why some people are so different and resort to such practice right from a very early stage like that in case of Ādi Śankarācārya and Mozart, the maestro, is not explained by such studies.

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138 Cited from Francis Herbert Bradley, *'The Principles of Logic'*, pp. 43-44.

139 Cited from Francis Herbert Bradley, *'Essays on Truth and Reality'*, p. 446.

John Locke (1632-1704) has refuted the doctrine of innate ideas. What to speak of individual atheism, whole tribes are reported to be there without the idea of God. Upholders of the innate ideas maintain that innate ideas are implicitly present in the mind and become explicit in the course of time. Locke says that this is true of all ideas and such innate ideas cease to be unique. According to him, there are no innate ideas "stamped upon the mind" from birth. But he also believed that impressions of senses were not the only source of knowledge. He stated, "The mind furnishes the understanding with ideas" (BK. 2:1:5). Since no distinction is implied here between "mind" and "understanding," it means that "the mind furnishes itself with ideas."

According to rationalism, there is a universal faculty of reason by virtue of which each individual has certain *innate ideas.* Like ideas, behaviour also may either be innate or may be learned, through experience. Taxes, reflexes and instincts are categories of innate behaviour.

7.4. Gaining knowledge

Human beings can see, hear, smell and feel. They, thus, have a lot of sense-data coming to the brain and reason. Hume and the preceding classical empiricists held that the manifolds of sense data or the sense-impressions are passing events. However, proper knowledge is obtained by ordering, connecting and synthesising them into some system. Senses and experiences lead to knowledge. This knowledge is of one kind. Another kind of knowledge could be such which is not dependent on experience. Could there be such a type of knowledge? Let us see.

Our mind may gain knowledge independently of experience through innate ideas or mental faculties. *A priori* is a term used to identify a type of knowledge that is obtained independently of experience. The term *a priori* is distinguished from the word, a *posteriori,* that means, the knowledge gained through the senses

and experience. These are the two main common ways in which philosophers argue that humans acquire knowledge.

For Aristotle, *a priori* referred to something, which was prior to something else. By "prior" he meant that something's existence was caused by the existence of another. Aristotle argued that to have knowledge of a prior thing, then, was to have knowledge of a causal relationship. Descartes used the term *a priori* in his quest for the foundation of all knowledge. For him, the knowledge of our own existence was *a priori* because (i) denying it leads to a contradiction, and (ii) we do not need to rely on our experiences to ponder our existence.

Kant also believed that *a priori* truths could be found. As stated earlier, the theory of innate ideas was transformed into that of *a priori* truths by Kant.

7.5 The 'initial capital'

A person/man at his birth, in the universe, possesses several physical, mental and spiritual elements with varying levels and blends of intensities. I prefer to call it 'the initial capital.' Some people call it as accumulated result of the past actions and deeds.[140] The scientists may call it the genotype. It is, in fact, a combination of genetics and spiritual endowment with which one is born. The innateness, instincts, measures of procreation of the species, intellect and, above all, quest for knowledge and salvation are some of the broad elements of this initial capital. There may be an amalgam of different intensities of each of these elements, which is specific to a person. Sometimes, the combination is so limiting that, as some people say, the person will have to take another birth to make self-realisation and liberation come true. The initial capital and elements thereof can be (i) used, (ii) unused or (iii) less used for self-realisation.

140 पूर्व जन्म का (सु) कृत्य

We seldom manifest our potential to its fullest. The human birth with one's own hard-earned initial capital is a gift of God. Many of us leave this gift packet unwrapped by not making efforts to actualise the potential of initial capital. So, do not wait. Unwrap this gift as early as possible.

8

The Hierarchy of Self-Realisation

There are stages for self-realisation of human beings. The rungs of the ladder of life, leading to self-realisation, can be very broadly grouped into the ascending states of:

1. Physical being,
2. Mental and social being,
3. Spiritual and universal being, and
4. The ultimate salvation.

One can stretch his outer limits. Through continuous stretching and making new height as the benchmark, one may attain further new heights of self-improvement. The journey is from outward to inward and from big and apparent (*sthūla*) to small and invisible (*sūkṣma*). The categories or rungs as observed, and some of these as experienced by me, are figuratively depicted. A man can evolve either gradually, through transition, or rapidly through transformation. There is an in-built gradual movement of a man from one category i.e. base category to higher categories of self-realisation.



Hierarchy of Self-realisation

For initial stages, this is somewhat comparable with Maslow's[141] hierarchy of needs but differs with that in later stages.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is as follows.

1) Physiological needs such as air, water, food, sleep, sex etc.,
2) Safety needs,
3) Needs of love, affection and belongingness,
4) Esteem needs, and
5) Self-actualisation

In the modified hierarchy given in this narration, birth with an initial capital, spiritual or transcendental levels of needs following self-actualisation etc. are added.

A common man first strives to meet these basic needs and then go ahead with other priorities. As is commonly stated in Bengal that what is needed by a man is *gāri* (car or vehicle), *sāri* (wife), and *bāri* (house). This is just an example of an index of need and desires. It is important to note that usually the lower needs take priority until met. Thus, deficiency needs are to be first satisfied for the growth to occur. However, there are exceptions which we shall discuss under the transformation—the fast track.

8.1 Birth with an initial capital

The birth of an individual ('*jīva*') takes place with an initial capital which, as explained earlier, is a combination of genotypic and spiritual endowment. The accumulated past deeds (*prārabdha karma*) matter in this regard and these determine the initial

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141 Maslow, Abraham Ho. 1968. *Toward a Psychology of Being*, D. Van Nostrand Company, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 68-30757.
Maslow, Abraham Ho. 1970. *Motivation and Personality*, 2d ed., Harper & Row, New York.

capital. Science may interpret it as an overall effect of a particular assemblage of genes after rigorous selection during the evolution over the years as reflected in the parents and now in the offspring that has taken birth. Initial capital thus, scientifically means the assemblage of genes and their expression pattern that has emerged from natural selection during thousands of years. That is one way of looking towards the accumulation of past deeds. Indian Hindu philosophy takes a view of accumulated past deeds. The significance of the accumulated past deeds is reflected in the allegory given below.

The parable relates to Sadana Kasai, the legendary (pious!) butcher. The king of the region wanted to have roasted meat during the night time but there was no meat in the royal kitchen. A man was sent to Sadana. When Sadana, with a knife in his hand, started moving towards a goat for carving out a loaf of meat, the goat said, "It has so happened, in various births and over the time, that I have killed you so many times and you have killed me so many times but now, at this moment if you kill me, you are going to start a new account." Sadana, who already was a pious one, got awakened by listening to this fact. Sometimes, when our past-accumulated deeds are to end, we unnecessarily open a new account and the cycle of life continues.

The overall effect of accumulated past deeds has, thus, an important bearing right from the birth and is reflected in the initial capital.

8.2 Physical Survival

Death is the ultimate truth for human beings. This realisation could lead to non-attachment.[142] Philosophers and even doctors teach us not to be scared of death.[143] Still people have attachment to and desire for a long life and physical survival. According to

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142 श्मशान वैराग्य

143 J.C. Barker. 1968. *Scared to Death.* The Garden City Press Ltd., Letchword, Hertfordshire. pp. 1-182.

'Yoga Darśan' of Patanjali, every person has an intrinsic desire to live and has an apprehension of death. This is called *abhiniveśa.*[144] A person longs for physical survival i.e.

- I should live.
- I should continue to live and should not die or get killed.
- I should not get heavily injured. This feeling is built in. It is instinctive. An infant, on the slightest indication of a fall, clutches to the mother's clothing or hand.
- I should get air, food and clothing. The Roman philosopher Seneca said long ago, "A hungry people neither listens to reason nor cares for justice, nor is bent by any prayers."
- I should have a shelter (i) for today, (ii) temporarily, and (iii) for lifetime, in that order.
- If I have one or all of the above for myself, the same should be extended, arranged and provided to those whom I either love or those who are my kins. In certain state of mind, the security for physical survival of one or more of the loved ones and kins may find priority over the security of the self.

8.3 The instinct(s) and desire to procreate: Over-indulgence vs. abstinence vs. sublimation

Once the physical survival is there, the person is led by the instinct and necessity for procreation, to multiply, to leave some of his own kind before fading out himself. The instincts and intelligence[145] both go together. Intelligence is the ability to adapt our behaviour to circumstances. But the instincts are difficult to vanish. Trying to eradicate the instincts is moving towards an almost insurmountable task, something in the vicinity of

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144 अभिनिवेश

145 S.A. Barnett. 1967. *Instincts and Intelligence: The Science of Behaviour in Animals and Men.* Mac Gibbon & Kee Publi. Pp. 1-250.

impossibility. Easier than this onerous task, but still difficult, is to sublimate the manifestations of the instincts.

The path of abstinence may not be feasible for all. Keeping away from and not indulging in things may not be easy. The instincts keep on forcing you to indulge. Another extreme could be over-indulgence. At the base categories, even over-indulgence or "doing it out" has been practised. Several philosophers do not recommend blind penance and abstinence. But there are lesser mortals who get stuck at the base categories or take such a long time to go through a stage that it outlives their duration of life. Therefore, persons at the lower rungs should not be confounded by the knowledgeables through such messages, which either cannot be understood or can be misunderstood by them. Lord Kṛṣṇa gives a message to the wise man that the manifestations of nature confound the ignorant persons, the persons who are not wise or are less wise and, therefore, indulge in these ramifications of the nature and related actions. The wise man should not unsettle the minds of the ignorant (*Gītā*, 3-29).[146] These ignorant persons are to be led gradually through their actions only (and not through discriminative knowledge etc. which they do not possess at that stage) for self-realisation.

Sublimation of the instincts/*libido* should be aimed. "Sublime" refers to an aesthetic value in which the primary factor is the presence or suggestion of transcendent vastness or greatness, as of power, heroism, and extent in space or time. It is felt as transcending our normal standards of measurement or achievement. It leads to a stimulation of our abilities and elevation of the self.

The earliest extant determination of the sublime as a distinct conception is ascribed to Longinus, but now supposed to be of an

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146 प्रकृतेर्गुणसम्मूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥
॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 3—29 ॥

earlier date (first century C.E.). In modern philosophy, it was given special prominence by Edmund Burke in his *'Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful'* (1756) and Henry Home in his *'Elements of Criticism'* who sought a psychological and physiological explanation. According to Burke, it is caused by a "mode of terror or pain," and is contrasted with the beautiful (rather than being part of the beautiful). Kant also distinguished it as a separate category from beauty, making it apply properly only to the mind, not to the object, and giving it a peculiar moral effect in opposing "the interests of sense."

The high intensity with which one indulges in the acts of lower categories can be made to sublime. This could well be the same as envisaged in manifestation and sublimation of Freud's "libido." Freud maintains that all activities are the manifestations of "libido," the essence and the root for sexual drive and procreation. Whether or not it is so, the path to self-realisation is in understanding the inner system of the self, knowing its stimuli and responses, and a conscious effort to sublimate.

Sublimation appears to be appropriate. One can spread and distribute the love to all creatures and elements of the universe, the person really being one of them only and carrying the privileges and vulnerabilities to the same degree as others. Good works of art, music, spirited pursuit of knowledge, doing good for humanity, etc. may be the results.

8.4 Declaration of having security and the physical survival

There is a tendency and even great urge to let others know that I am secured as far as physical survival is concerned. There is a constant declaration and show off.

For show-off and declaration, accumulation of wealth and white goods is pursued even through wrong means. It starts with inclusivity and tends to end with exclusivity. One wants to get included in the group of affording people and after having done this one tends to become more affording and exclusive than

others. Then, one desires that others should not/cannot belong to his/her group. Inclusivity, to start with, demands that "I should also afford and possess what others have." Exclusivity, which tends to end but never ends with, demands that "Others cannot (and often should not) afford and possess what I have." This is endless, meaningless and futile pursuit. Accumulation of any material or kind is forbidden. It should be desirably nil and feasibly not more than the actual present need.

Your rich or poor status is decided not by what you have but by whether or not you crave for having more. If you do not crave for a thing, it is as good as having it. If you have a thing and yet you crave for more, it is as good as not having it. Intense craving for a worldly thing indicates a huge void felt for that thing. The scriptures say that one who drinks more is the most thirsty and one who craves for more wealth is the most poor.

The way you earn matters. Wrongful earnings block self-realisation of the one who is engaged in it and also of those dependent ones who knowingly and willingly enjoy the worldly fruits of such accumulated wealth. Declaration and show-off of ill-gotten wealth is the repudiatable yet most frequent futile indulgence observed in the so-called metro culture. As Confucius said, "Wealth and even honour acquired contrary to righteousness are not stable and are like passing clouds."

Socialisation, living in groups, is a way to achieve security, to feel protected and to get a chance to make the declaration of having achieved the security. Man is a social being, yet seclusion is strongly advocated in scriptures. Both these two states can co-exist for a common man to start with. A conflict arises in thinking as to who are those persons who want to live in groups. The weak, necessarily, has to do it for most of the time. The greater the weakness, the bigger is the group. The strong may need a group but probably a small group. They may need a big group for some time only. The group has advantages for survival. The group may have disadvantage for those who wish to have a

fast release from bondage, a fast transition and a swift flight to self-realisation. If an enlightened person is with a group, who gets benefited? Gernerally, the group gets benefited as a whole but not the enlightened person necessarily. The group may evolve you at times but the group may average you out often, if not always. Being in a group most of the time, you become what others want you to be, not what you want to be and often not what you should and must be.

One should not waste time in pleasing people at large even though one may have some temporary materialistic benefits. Bill Cosby said, "I do not know the key to success, but the key to failure is to please everyone."

Being fond of making declarations of your achievements (?) will leave little time and efforts for self-analysis and introspection. This, alas! is the category that takes a great toll of the human beings.

8.5 Social recognition, prestige and honour

Having secured oneself and let others be known about it, the person starts enjoying a feeling of having established himself. Once the person is sure that this part has been done, he embarks upon his efforts for social recognition. He longs to be appreciated and recognised by others. In some persons, this urge of recognition is so great that it could lead to heroism. The person searches for a cause and behaves in a way that others know and recognise him.

Sometimes, a person may even sacrifice the physical survival and related aspects in order to get social recognition. This translates to laying down one's life heroically. The point is that once a person has established himself in one category, the need, wants and desire for that category become meaningless. One can, then, sacrify the lower category for the sake of securing the higher category.

Sometimes, the activities undertaken for social recognition get blurred with religious activities. Let us take a hypothetical but interesting case of a wealthy person who uses his own

money, or the case of a group-leader who raises money by contacting people, for constructing a (huge) temple and creating an organisational set up related to it. This could be merely an effort for social recognition and may have nothing to do with religion and self-realisation despite the fact that the set-up so created could provide a medium to many people for self-realisation.

Such recognition-craving persons have a garb that they are doing this for the benefit of people at large. They do not understand that more evolved are those who do not perform for the benefit of others but do good things with non-attachment. Benefit of people could be the result but should not be the objective and reason for the pride of an evolved person. One should not have even this attachment and pride of doing good to others and should not over-play his existence. We shall further discuss this matter later in this book (Section 11.4.6).

An act, thus, may be a good deed but a lot depends on the objective and motive with which it is performed. A mere ritualistic, yet religious, deed is appreciated as not being bad, but better would be the category of those who do not do it for social recognition.

8.6 Self-actualisation

The self-actualisation has been used here in a limited sense and is confined only to the extent of mental and social aspects of man. This is the last rung of the mental and social being. The person asks himself, "Have I actually become what I ought to be as per my (self-judged) potential?" There could be examples where a person says 'yes' but these may be only a few in numbers. Only a few persons even among scientists, MDs, CEOs, successful farmers, etc. would respond in affirmative to have realised self-actualisation in true sense.

There is probably a test for judging the attainment of self-actualisation. Would one like to have the same birth and same or similar role he played in this birth again? If the answer is yes, the self-actualisation is there. If answer is no, self-actualisation may

or may not be there. Most of the common men would respond by desiring that they do not want to repeat this birth and if the God be pleased and have mercy, they would like to have some change or even liberation. Persons having self-actualisation may respond differently. Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate, is understood to have replied to this question that, if possible, he would again like to have the same birth and the same role as played in his (then) present birth. This affirms the self-actualisation he has reached.

If a person has reached this stage, it is relatively easier to go ahead only on the account that major responsibilities are over and any deed on the basic things does not remain. This is somewhat similar to the thinking that after having successfully passed the stages[147] viz. preparatory phase and active phase (*Brahmacarya Āśram* and *Gṛhastha Āśram*), one is quite ready to enter the retreat phase (*Vānaprastha Āśram*), and finally the renunciation (*Sanyāsa*) phase. If one has successfully gone through the stages of mental and social being, all energy can, then, be directed towards spiritual ascent.

It is, however, to be noted that this stage is not basically or essentially to be attained *in toto* at this rung for embarking upon the spiritual path. We know that forms are actualising themselves at all rungs of the ladder except the last one. It is a matter of degree. Some rungs are higher than others. Higher rungs have lower rungs as their matter or potentiality. Moreover, in spiritual sense, the pure actuality i.e. *actus purus*, is the Supreme as there is no potentiality in Him which He has to actualise.

8.7 Introspection and purity of thoughts

Having attained physical, social and mental satisfaction, self-introspection may start which is the first stage of spiritual ascent. The self-intriguing nature is awakened and it takes one through

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147 ब्रह्मचर्य आश्रम, गृहस्थ आश्रम, वानप्रस्थ आश्रम, सन्यास आश्रम ।.

several paths of thinking. It discriminates between being successful and being righteous.

A person may say, "this is my body." If body is of me, then it (body) is not me. Your body is not you. It is just like saying, "this is my house." Then, I am not the house; house is not me. Similarly, I am not the body; body is not me. Then, who is this 'I'/'Me' (*ko aham*)?

In the West, the oracle of Delphi asserts this by stating "Man! Know thyself." It is what we say in India as *Ātmānam Viddhi.*[148] Who am I (*Ko aham*)? From where I have come?[149] I understand that *ko aham* is the process through which one reaches the target-stage that is *so aham*. It leads to the understanding and realising that there is an over-ruling all-engrossing power and I am part of it. In fact, I am it. *So aham.*

While introspecting and expediting self-realisation, one may ascertain the values of phenomena and their results by asking "Is it immortal?" or "Will it stand the test of time?" A thing or a state that does not last for long is not worth pursuing and possessing. Buddha, the enlightened one, perceived that the youthful life gives way to diseases, old age and death. Death is the eventual and ultimate stage, of ceasing to be, of all mortal(!) components of the living beings. It is to be remembered again and again and never to be forgotten. This thought would keep us away from indulgence and at least from over-indulgence in acts, which are mortal, short-lived, and *phāni* (which gets destroyed). Purity of thoughts is a pre-requisite for introspection and spiritual realisation to start. It is said that a pure thought can create a (whole) creation. The search for long-lasting and immortal values and spiritual realisation in the form of awakening of self (*ātma caitanya*) will then start.

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148 आत्मानम् विद्धि ।
149 कस्त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः आदि शंकराचार्य

8.8 The awakening: Selflessness to pure awakening

Awakening of the self (*Ātma caitanya*) is stated to be comprised of four states (*Chāndogyopaniṣad*: Section 8). They are:

1. The waking state or *Jāgrat,*
2. The dreaming state or *Svapna,*
3. The dreamless deep sleep state or *Suṣuptī,* i.e. the Self situated in dreamless deep sleep[150], and
4. The pure awakened, supreme consciousness state or *Turīya*[151] or *Śuddha caitanya.*

The above four states respectively deal with (i) gross (*sthūla*) body, (ii) subtle (*sūkṣma*) body, (iii) causal (*kāraṇ*) body, and (iv) free soul or formless state.

Let me put it very simply, as an initiation, in order to start understanding the complex, self-awakening. If one considers this world as it is apparent without considering its real intent, one is in the 'waking' stage and is in the gross body. If one considers that this world is temporary like a dream, he is in the 'dreaming' stage and is in the subtle body. If one considers that all that is happening is that which is seen in a (continuing) deep sleep, then his Self is situated in deep sleep and is in the causal body. Lastly, the pure-awakened ones are those who are not different from the Supreme and the soul is free from bondage/nescience.

Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad also describes *Ātma* as *Turīya Caitanya* or *Śuddha Caitanya* (Pure Awakened). Actually, the first three stages are considered to still have some element of nescience or *avidya* whereas the fourth stage has none of it.

In these, especially in *Suṣupti,* a state of "being nothing" or "selflessness" is realised. Actually, this being nothing is being everything. This state often comes through utter devotion or *bhakti. Sufi* path emphasises on it. However, it should not come as a flash or

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150 *'Prajña"* (प्रज्ञा) as stated in the *Māṇḍukyopaniṣad, Mantra* 5 and 11.
151 तुरीय चैतन्य ।

temporarily rather it should be an enduring stage. Some attain it through the quest for knowledge. In this state, one becomes a real part of nature with no self-motives. He probably moves from *cetana* to "apparently *Jaḍa* state" which is really super-*cetana*" state. To illustrate, there is the well known case of the highly evolved 'Jaḍabharat, who was taken by the king's servants as a common man and asked to become one of the carriers of a king's *palki* (chariot). 'Jȧḍabharat' was punished because he made the *palki* unstable while trying to save some ants from coming under his feet. It later dawned upon the king that he is an enlightened one. Another case is that of an enlightened *muni* who was pierced through the ears when in a *samādhi* or selfless state. There are several cases to prove that this state is one of the high rungs of self-realisation.

8.9 Liberation (freedom)

It is only through knowledge born of discriminative wisdom coupled with the grace of God that liberation is possible. The state of *turīya caitanya* is quintessential for freedom and salvation. The physical and mental being fades and gradually gives way to spiritual being. The shackles and chains are gradually broken and the consciousness dawns upon. Deliverance from the bondage leads to freedom/liberation. One becomes liberated and then, as a sequel and not by liberation itself, attains salvation (*mokṣa*). Here the freedom is meant to be freedom from nescience *avidyā naśa*.[152] Once free, the supremacy of the infinite is realised and one eventually becomes one with it.

Liberation/freedom itself is not salvation. *Vedānta* also indicates that even after freedom from nescience, the *Jīva* continues to live till the past accumulated deeds[153] are not over.

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152 अविद्या नाश
153 प्रारब्ध कर्म

Having a token-bondage is probably needed so that great personalities could remain available for the good of all. Many of these token-bondages are self-imposed by the enlightened ones as a cause for being in form on this earth for leading the humanity ahead. An example will suffice to understand this.

A great saint or *Paramahansa* had a weakness for eating, especially sweets. He would often go to kitchen to search for his choicest eatables. He would often be wondered upon by others. Such a great saint and such a lust for sweet eatables! A day came when *Paramahansa* replied to this query. Thus spoke *Paramahansa,* "I have removed all bondages. Only this one desire, to eat, remains" (as the cause for my being on this earth and you can deduce what shall happen if this also is shed off). Finally, the day came when *Paramahansa* did not long for sweets. Shortly after that he left this world for his heavenly abode. The token-bondage was shed-off and so did the mortal existence along with it.

If one has a state of physical and mental being, he/she has some bondage. Having bondage is being away from salvation. Having a token-bondage is liberation awaiting salvation in case of the great personalities. Do those who are fully evolved and have attained salvation would be with us mortals for long in that state or form? Having no bondage is being free and ultimately attaining salvation, *nirvāṇā* or *mokṣa* that is the state of being with and unifying with the supernatural.

The *mokṣa,* especially as per the *advaitavāda* and *sānkhya,* is further explained later in a separate section.

8.10 Realisation through transition and transformation

A person may get stuck up and may not evolve further beyond a base stage. A person may continue to evolve gradually but steadily. Alternatively, a person may evolve gradually but at a fast pace. Transition is moving ahead i.e. *caraivaiti-caraivaiti*[154]

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154 चरैवेति—चरैवेति ।

meaning "keep moving-keep moving" and sometimes being on the run from one category to another for realisation. Exceptionally, a person may jump and skip several rungs to reach higher stages of self-realisation. Transformation is jumping to the highest or the near-highest rung of the realisation ladder.

The persons with initially high genetic and spiritual endowment may not evolve step by step. They are capable of skipping the categories and transcend the gradual realisation. They transmute directly to one of the higher categories. The realisation of futility, of some or all the intermediary steps, dawns upon them not through their own (suffered) experience but by innateness or by observing the fate of others. Buddha, the enlightened one, had it by observing the plight of others. Without seeing the condition of others also, some can visualise that through the pursuit of knowledge and scriptures or through the preachings and practices imparted by the "gurus". Such persons are on the fast track of realisation. Swami Vivekananda had transformation through his "guru." "Guru" stretches his hand to the worthy and helps him climb up the rungs of the ladder of life towards self-realisation.

Ādi Śankaracarya lived his mortal self only for 32 years[155] and besides writing *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya,* he wrote *Bhāṣya*s on 11 *Upaniṣad*s and on *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*. He performed several other scholarly and philosophical deeds leading to godliness, the main ones being the resurrection of *Vedānta* and establishment of non-dualism (*advaitavāda*). That was a perfect case of transformation where initial capital was par-godliness.

Once Ādi Śankaracarya was questioned by the wife of Mandana Mishra, Ubhaya Bhārati, on some aspects that concerned going through the experience of *bhoga*. It was hard on

155 It is stated that age is irrelevant for a wise person; age is not considered in case of a wise person (विद्वांसो न वयं समीक्षते).

Ādi Śankarācārya to relate it as he had got enlightenment through transformation and had not experienced or gone through the stage of *bhoga*. How he could reply to the satisfaction of the questioner is another case, but it establishes the fact that realisation can come through transformation as well.

8.11 The riders in self-realisation

One's "initial capital" of intellect and spirituality decides the path and speed towards realisation. Some are on the fast track whereas others get stuck in a base category. "Not getting stuck" or working with non-attachment (*niṣkāma karma*) can lead to higher categories although apparently one might not have had physical security or materials of other lower categories. You are then beyond the stage in which you apparently are. The means of physical sustenance are kept to a limit with non-attachment whereas the real quest is on and is 'the' thing. There are numerous examples of this. "Sadana kasai" is one of them.

A person's acts may not conform to a category *in toto*. A person may belong to a category at large. At times, he may behave in a manner that is atypical, generally of a lower and seldom of a higher category than the one to which he belongs. This play, out-of-category range or "wobble," is minimised as one transcends and goes to the higher categories. It is completely absent at the enlightenment or *nirvāṇa*.

The play or "wobble" is also to be used positively. As stated above, man has confines and limits as per one's genetic and spiritual endowment or initial capital. However, there is a range of capacity and capability and a person himself fixes his/her average performance within this range. For example, person 'A' may have a range of a lower degree but having some overlapping with the range of another person 'B' who has a range of higher degree. Still person 'A' may excel person 'B' if the average performance of the person 'A' is towards his best of the range whereas that of the person 'B' is towards his middle or lower

levels of the range. With efforts even the range can be stretched. This process makes one transcend the limits of initial capital. This is true for almost all the attributes of a person. This is true for the routine chores and also for creativity. One may use this to become master of routine affairs. But that is not enough and not the end. If one can finish and complete the routine affairs quickly and competently, then one has time for higher goals.

It is not an act that is important; more important is the way you perform that act. Vince Lombardi said, "perfection is not attainable but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence." Aristotle has observed on the pursuit of excellence: "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Excellence lies in doing even ordinary things in an excellent manner. One, then, moves towards creativity, self-realisation and perfection. Thus, to enhance one's initial capital sometimes one does not have to wait for next birth(s).

9

Essential Elements for Self-Realisation

Discrimination, detachment and a great urge are the main requisites for self-realisation but there are several other associated characteristics, which help in the way. Let us see what the requisites for self-realisation broadly are.

9.1 Meaningful vis-à-vis successful life

The word 'success' is used here to connote success in general, as people take it commonly, whereas 'meaningfulness' to mean self-realisation in areas other than physical and materialistic. Man is a born consumer. He starts consuming even when in womb and continues consuming after birth as well, A stage, however, comes when he starts contributing also. In a meaningful life, a person contributes more than he consumes. At an ideal stage, he should consume minimum and contribute maximum.

We should live for something besides making a living. Most of the people live to earn livelihood and get some place in the society. After attaining it, in their good judgment, they virtually and statically repeat the same type of actions and vainly wait for the day of their death. As some say, we have learned to make a living but not a life; we have added years to life, not life to years; we have conquered outer space, but not inner space; we have done larger things, but not taller things; we have built fancier houses, but broken homes; we have gathered conveniences but dispelled happiness[156].

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156 सुविधा है पर सुख नहीं।

The (worldly) success and winning over others, is often at an enormous spiritual cost which, many a times, is beyond redemption. Louis Kronenberger has stated:

"The technique of winning is so shoddy,
The terms of winning are so ignoble,
The tenure of winning is so brief, and
The spectre of the has-been (ex-) a shameful
rather than a pitiable sight today,
(That it) Brings a sudden chill even to our sunlit moments."

The realisation, that a human being has not only to lead his life for meeting biological and social needs but also spiritual needs, is the first essential element for self-realisation.

9.2 Believe in order to understand

It is very difficult to fulfil the requirements of self-realisation through reason alone. That is why many teachers advocate the path of piety and devotion. As stated earlier, faith is not opposed to reason, but is higher than reason. Reason and faith could and have to go together. These two must not be sundered.

In the west, Anselm had the formula '*credo ut intelligam*' (I believe in order to understand).

We have to start with a clean state of mind, a *tabula rasa*. Shedding of pre-conceived notions and other constructs is essential for spiritual pursuit. A good listener and imbiber has to receive the right messages without barriers and respond in a heightened state of understanding. We should not allow our sub-conscious to introduce and impose such of our experiential and intellectual baggage which would inhibit our spiritual growth. That is why, in philosophy, wisdom is held higher and above knowledge. You cannot experience the fragrance of wisdom if you stink only of knowledge and intellect which are only the preliminary rungs to be used and left behind to climb higher and upwards.

Let us take an example of questioning which apparently has its roots in taking everything to be explained by reason. One person asked a 'guru' that why a very young about 6-month old baby suffers in a riot, in a calamity etc. He is so young that he might not have done anything wrong. The answer, which I also listened to and witnessed, from the 'guru' was that child does not suffer, at least not to the same extent, as others/elders suffer emotionally and out of compassion. Also, in this very great universe, this may be owing to the result of abuse of will that leads to happenings such as wars. A mad or a half-mad person may slap you on the road without any cause. You may be punished wrongly. We know that both determinism (predestination) and freedom of will are true. This is called 'compatibilism'. Freedom of will is given to one person as also to the other person. The abuse of will, then, may happen. Further, sufferings of the innocent, as intended to be explained above, may also be the result of adjustment in the passing of great dynamism and cycles of events of universe. Several natural calamities such as earthquakes and 'tsunami' belong to this category of 'adjustment'. In a grand design, where certain principles such as types and characteristics of forces are set, every action need not be interfered with by the Supreme. All components of the nature collectively and in their interdependence are the determinants. Thus, both determinism and freedom of will operate. This is what I heard. This, for me, was an explanation that could elucidate suffering even without labelling it as the result of past deeds. In this explanation, one does not even have to bring in the notion of past deeds and rebirth. Now, one can take this or one may still continue not to believe in the Supreme.

Over-use and allowing supremacy of intellect may have extreme results. It may, at times, lead to sensualism. Many intellectuals have a type of spirituality that, in fact, is spiritual sensualism. Some people may study philosophy and pursue

spiritualism simply to please their intellect.[157] Nevertheless, some people believe that sensualism is not something to be abhorred or shunned. They believe that there can be no spiritual upliftment when sensualism is suppressed. As mind and body are one, it should rather be accepted as part of nature and be sublimated eventually through training. But, then, one has to go beyond that. Purpose is not only to have mental sensualism, that is corporeal, but strive for self improvement.

Existential love and pain, when sublimated, can bring about work of transcendental quality. Often the out-pourings of a tortured mind make for a stunning success and result in great literary and artistic masterpieces. Why, then, passion and sensualism cannot be sublimated to attain divinity? Psychologist Eric Fromm points out that love must be all encompassing by nature for an individual to be spiritually liberated. To love some people and resent others is not true love. Further realisation would be not to love someone more and love someone less, but to love all alike.

Voracious reading with a sub-conscious goal to get recognised as a well-read person, alone would not be enough. The purpose would, then, be lost. One would become erudite but would be far from evolving spiritually. Discriminative knowledge and wisdom are, therefore, higher than what is commonly understood as knowledge.

9.3 Introspection

One has to be an introvert rather than extrovert in order to initiate self-realisation. This is called *bahirnirodha* as stated by Ādi Śankaracarya.[158]

157चित्तस्य लालनम् ।

158 बाह्ये निरुद्धे मनसः प्रसन्नता, मनःप्रसादे परमात्मदर्शनम् ।
तस्मिन्सुदृष्टे भवबन्धनाशो, बहिर्निरोधः पदवी विमुक्तेः ॥
॥विवेक चूड़ामणि, 336 ॥

Silence is needed for self-realisation. The world is noisy and full of superfluous activities. We have to achieve and celebrate, as T. S. Eliot says, "stillness amidst movement, fixity amidst fluidity and silence amidst music." Silence and meditation with pure heart are more useful than indulging in verbose activities. Other upliftments would, then, follow.

Many people believe that they are indispensable at least for their tenure of life. Nobody is indispensable. Probably much better options exist if one leaves the scene. That is how the realisation goes on. For taking a lesson in this aspect and also for obtaining some peace, one may have an experiment on seclusion and isolation. The person should spend a few months all alone and cut from all contacts.[159] There should be no communication sources such as phone connections, cell phones, newspapers, televisions, radios, etc. If one is a little weak, he may arrange to be informed only in case of great emergency such as accidents involving very near kins etc. This treatment could be useful for persons suffering from a constant feeling of (non-existent) mistrust of others' capabilities and from paranoia. Such persons think that they are very special creations of God and superior to others. They do not seem to understand that everybody and everything is a special creation of God. Such people are often intolerant of other people. After this seclusion, they may realise that they are not only not special but also dispensable.

After this treatment for a few months (or days, to start with), one will learn at least two things viz. (i) the world goes on without him/her and probably for the better, and (ii) one is quite dispensable. Additionally, one will cease to have longing for unnecessary indulgence and will become an introvert, ready for self-realisation.

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159 I have been told that a few hotels arranging this type of seclusion have come up particularly near Kulu-Manali and also at other places. One's own arrangement would, however, be desirable to manage seclusion.

Faith and devotion are needed on sustained basis. These are good to start with but later the reason and wisdom have to emerge. It is wise to start with action/work and worship together as early as one can even during the early stages so that purity of thoughts is attained. Faith and devotion bring purity of mind[160] and lead to the higher state i.e. of knowledge that leads to discriminative knowledge (*bodha*). The discriminative knowledge and a great urge for understanding the true self, take one to liberation.

9.4 Get started

The most difficult thing in getting a work done or accomplishment be made is "to get started." Without being afraid of the great goal, get started. Do not bother how worthy you are. Great men have stated and reiterated this fact. It is not the failure but low aim that is the crime.[161] Do not be afraid of mistakes. The only man who never makes mistakes is the man who never does anything.[162] It is better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing flawlessly.[163] So, just get started.

9.5 The four essentials

A great urge for self-realisation, non-attachment and discriminative knowledge are the main determinants. Other necessities are, then, realised and followed. The four-fold path of *Sādhana Catustaya*[164] of *jñāna* to attain *Brahm*, as pointed out by Ādi Śankaracarya, comprises the following four elements:

1. *Viveka* (right discrimination),
2. *Vairāgya* (detachment from sensory attractions leading to the extinction of desires),

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160 चित्त शुद्धि

161 As stated by Lokmanya Tilak.

162 As stated by Theodore Roosevelt.

163 As stated by Robert Schuller.

164 *Śloka* 18 to 32 of *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi*;
साधन—चतुष्टयः विवेक, वैराग्य, षट् सम्पत्ति एवं मुमुक्षुत्व ।

3. *Ṣaṭ sampatti*[165] comprising the six viz. calmness (*sama*), self-restraint (dama), detachment (*uparati*), endurance (*titikṣā*), faith (*śraddhā*), and creative concentration (*samādhāna / samādhi*) and, above all,
4. The sustained urge and resolute will, i.e. *Mumukṣutva.*[166]

The inquisitiveness has to be to the extent of "madness." Nothing less than madness will do to reach the supernatural. This is called *mumukṣutva,* the sustained urge and the resolute will to attain salvation. One has to make a determined resolve that he/she would no longer accept the appearances, the impressions, and the plurality but would accept the reality and nothing but reality from now on.

The student, after fulfilling these four scriptural requirements, should proceed in the direction of discriminative wisdom (*bodha*).

The various requisites for spiritual perfection are (cryptically) reduced to two viz. detachment (*vairāgya*) and discriminative knowledge (*bodha*) (*Śloka*-375 of the *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi*[167]). Ādi Śankaracarya observes that detachment and discriminative knowledge constitute the two wings of the bird called soul in its spiritual ascent.

Following the path of *śravaṇa* (to listen), *manana* (to think/analyse) and *nididhyāsana* (to meditate), the aspirant should move towards the *nirvikalpa samādhi* and realise that he is not different from the supreme *Brahm.*

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165 षट्संपत्तिः शम, दम, उपरति, तितिक्षा, श्रद्धा एवं समाधान ।

166 मुमुक्षुत्व

167 वैराग्य बोधौ पुरुषस्य पक्षिवत पक्षौ विजानीहि विचक्षण त्वम् ।
विमुक्तिसौधाग्रलताधिरोहणं ताभ्यां विना ना अभ्यंतरेण सिध्यति ॥
॥ विवेक चूड़ामणि, 375 ॥

10

Is a Guru Needed?

The type of company (*saṃgata*) and the type of teacher or 'guru' also determine the self-realisation. Ādi Śankaracarya went all the way on foot from Kaladi, Kerala to Omkareshwara (near Indore, Madhya Pradesh) to his self-chosen 'guru', Guru Govindapada. There may be various types of 'gurus.' Let us try to understand this by an allegory.

Many persons were there in a jail. They hoped for a better life but could not get it. One day, a person from outside came and gave them good food. Another day, a second person came and provided the prisoners with good clothes and rugs. The second person has done much better than the first one as his/her presents could go a long way. This way, several persons came and did (good and better) things to comfort the prisoners. But, nobody took them out of prison. One day, a person came with a key to the prison door and opened it and declared all prisoners free. This person liberated the prisoners and not merely comforted them. The real 'guru' has to liberate us and not merely comfort us. The best 'guru' is the one who brings out the best in you. Our own efforts, of course, will qualify us for deserving such a '*satguru*.'

Let us see what a true teacher or 'guru' is. As per the etymology, *gu* means darkness and *ru* means light. Thus, 'guru' is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance and nescience.[168]

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168 गुकारश्चान्धकारो हि रुकारस्तेज उच्यते ।
अज्ञानग्रासकं ब्रह्म गुरुरेव न संशयः ॥ गुरुगीता ॥

'Guru' is one who himself does not become the centre of attention of his disciple but facilitates the disciple to move towards the realization of the true self and the Supreme.[169]

A 'guru' has to turn the disciple towards the Supreme and not towards the 'guru' himself. Alas! the present world is full of fake 'gurus' who turn the people, often in masses, towards them (the 'gurus') but not towards the Supreme. Such types of misleading 'gurus' are both sinners and criminals[170] because they have engaged a person in vain who otherwise could choose another way and could get self-evolved. Life of such a disciple who is engaged with a wasteful 'guru' goes waste.

Having a 'guru' directly may or may not matter for those who are capable. The main or central determinant is one himself and his urge for self-realisation. Having a 'guru' directly may not be essential, otherwise how Kabir evolved to be a great saint although Swami Ramanand did not accept him as a disciple. Same is the case of Ekalavya who could not be taught by Dronacārya as desired by him. Also, Dattātreya claimed to have not one but 24 'gurus.' Thus, the main determinant is the one (disciple?) himself. Actually, man himself is his own 'guru' (*Bhāgavata*, 11-7-20).[171] Others just facilitate the cause.

There are different and sometimes conflicting and debatable views about what a woman should do if she intends to have a 'guru.' She may be in different roles. But some say that if she is a married woman with a righteous husband, then it would be better to accept the husband, who has the desired characteristics

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169 गुरु गोविन्द दोनों खडे, काके लागूँ पाय ।
बलिहारी गुरु आपनी, गोविन्द दियो बताय ॥

170 A sinner (पापी) gets his account settled by suffering for a period (in hell?) but a criminal's (अपराधी) account is settled only when the aggrieved person himself pardons that criminal.

171 आत्मनो गुरुरात्मैव पुरुषस्य विसेषतः ॥ श्रीमद्भागवत, 11—7—20 ॥

of a noble husband, as her 'guru.'[172] This suggestion could be due to the reason that there are not many who can remain unmoved by the worldly desires and instincts. Some Indian scriptures forbid even remaining of male with very close female relatives and even mother, sister or daughter in a lone place for a very long period and continuously.[173] But is this differentiation rational? Many women saints and evolved women had been there who could serve as 'guru' to others. Therefore, the suggestion may not be binding and other persons, including women, could also deservedly take on the role of 'guru.'

In the *Upaniṣads*, there are statements and incidents described which show that women could be as learned and erudite as men. There seems to be no bar on caste also. Several instances have been documented where *Brahmins* had to learn certain things from *kṣatriyas* and others. Caste has to be denounced as an evolved person is to be benefited from learning.

Thus, we have seen that first the disciple has himself to be eligible and capable and secondly a real 'guru', and not one of the commonly available 'gurus', has to be there to lead one through.

The essence is that one has to be in the company of learned and evolved person(s) to attain the discriminate knowledge as stated in *Rāmacarita Mānas* (*Bāla Kāṇḍa*, 3-4),[174] but not necessarily by having a 'guru' directly for oneself. Fortunate are those who deservedly have a real 'guru' to guide them through. Thus, attained (and enhanced) capability towards having discriminative knowledge itself leads to realization and liberation.

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172 पतिरेव गुरू स्त्रीणां पद्मपुराण स्वर्ग 0, 51/51; ब्रह्मपुराण, 80/47)

173 माता स्वस्त्रा दुहित्रा वा न विविक्तासनो भवेत् ।
बलवानिन्द्रियग्रामो विद्वासमपि कर्षति ॥ मनु 0 2/215 ॥

174 बिनु सतसंग विवेक न होई ।। मानस, बाल .3/4 ।।

11

Moving Towards an Integration of Action, Devoutness and Knowledge

A conflict arises in the mind of a common man in regard to the selection of a path for self-realisation. The action, devoutness (taken commonly as work and worship) and knowledge are the paths which are apparently distinct but are actually integrated and in essence unified paths. Action, devoutness and knowledge are, in fact, different stages of the self-realisation. Knowledge (*jñāna*) and devoutness/piety (*bhakti*) both lead to the same goal. There are numerous examples in support of this truth. Let us see how action can lead to devoutness and eventually to knowledge.

11.1 The difference in perception: *Saguṇa* and *nirguṇa Brahm*

It has been observed that piety and worship can bring about knowledge and liberation. Both the paths lead apparently to the same goal. However, there is some differences. The difference is due to perception of reality, the *Brahm*, in a form (*saguṇa*) or as formless (*nirguṇa*).

Saguṇa Brahm and *'nirguṇa Brahm'* are not two separate entities. The same *'nirguṇa Brahm'* appears as *saguṇa Brahm* for the worship of devotees. *Saguṇa Brahm* is also called as *Īśvara*. *Nirguṇa Brahm* is the highest form from the transcendental

(*paramārthika*) viewpoint, whereas the *saguṇa Brahm* is from the relative (*vyavahārika*) viewpoint.[175]

The Supreme Truth is that *Brahm* is non-dual and relationless. As per Ādi Śankarācārya, this world is only relatively real (*vyavahārika sat*). He advocated *vivarta-vāda* (appearances based on transfiguration), the theory of phenomenal appearance or super-imposition (*adhyāsa*). Just as snake is super-imposed on the rope in the twilight, this world and body are super-imposed on *Brahm* or *Ātman* or Suprėme Self. The truth appears when nescience or *avidya* is destroyed through knowledge of the Eternal. *Ātman* is referred to as the perceiver, feeler and thinker in the physical, mental and intellectual planes, respectively (the Chinmaya Mission emphasises this, in particular, in order to achieve higher planes).

Indian philosophy believes in the importance of both *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa Brahm.*' The *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*, as also others, gives *mantras* for worship or *upāsanā.*[176]

11.2 Devoutness

Devoutness comprises *śraddhā* and *bhakti*. *Śraddhā* stands for the intellectual conviction borne out of a deep study and/or experience. *Bhakti* is an important step that obliterates the distinction between the aspirant and the God. *Karma* i.e. action, but without attachment, is also needed as a step. These help bring purity of mind that leads to the higher state of *jñāna.*

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175 पारमार्थिक एवं व्यावहारिक सत् ।

176 *Nirguṇa upāsanā* (निर्गुण उपासना):

अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तरूपं शिवं प्रशान्तममृतं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
तथाऽऽदिमध्यान्तविहीनमेकं विभुं चिदानन्दमरुपमद्भुतम् ॥6॥

Saguṇa upāsanā (सगुण उपासना):

उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तम् ।
धयात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात् ॥7॥

For *bhakti*, one has to go through heart and must have devotion and feelings. Evan H. Hopkins said, "While faith makes all things possible, it is the love (towards God) that makes all things easy."

The relationship with the symbol of the Supreme or the God could be of several types such as when a person listens to things related to Him, sings in His glory, remembers Him, worships His feet, worships Him, praises Him, and is His servant, friend, (motherly) caretaker and finally becomes one and united with Him. Thus, there are nine different types of devotion (Bhagavat, 7-5-23)[177].

There are four kinds of worshipers viz., (i) the distressed, (ii) the inquisitive, (iii) the seeker of wealth, and (iv) the seeker of the knowledge of the Absolute (*Gītā*, 7-16).[178]

Music has been an intrinsic part of Indian spirituality. Starting from *'Sāma Veda,'* the precursor of Indian music, in the past to several singing-poet saints in relatively later period, the music/'naad' has been a well-established medium of devotion, concentration and contemplation.

Many *"bhaktas"* have followed combination of some or all forms of devotion for self-realisation.

Lord Kṛṣṇa states that followers of *'nirguṇa Brahm'*, who are engaged in the welfare of all, also reach Him (Gītā, 12-4)[179]. But, He further states that path of knowledge is difficult (Gītā, 12-

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177 श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् ।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥ भागवत 7, 5, 23 ॥

178 चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिजनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 7-16 ॥

179 ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 12-4॥

5).[180] Everybody cannot follow it. Thus, the path of piety is easy to follow and is generally recommended by elders.

11.3 Starting simply but steadily on the path of devoutness

11.3.1 CHOOSING A GOD: MOVING FROM 'A' GOD TO 'THE' GOD

People follow different religions and different sects within a religion. People of a sect may also have different paths and different gods to worship. No matter which god one selects, the aim should be to move from 'a' god to 'the' God.

In most of the cases, one gets his religion fixed by birth. There is little choice and proselytization may or may not be the recourse to it. Within a religion, whatever choice is there, one often gets bewildered as to which god to choose for worship. The selection depends on one's own psyche and awareness. The total environment, including the mental environment and the past experiences gone through, decide it.

The theistic approach, including apotheosis and deification is a support and point of initiation for those who would not be able to directly embark upon the path of knowledge. The Hindu religion has numerous gods and goddesses to choose from. If one does not like a god (!) as much as one should, one may choose another god. Several gurus advise to choose one god as your own personal source of energy and protection. For choosing a god, a person may sit quietly and comfortably.[181] Visualise the gods you like. Choose the one you like the most. That god may be your coveted and desired one.[182] Some believe that the past affiliations also hint, inspire and guide in going towards a particular god.

The multitude, if not plurality in exact sense, of even a coveted form is not uncommon. It is, rather, very common. Some

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180 क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 12-5॥

181 सुस्थ

182 उपास्य/आराध्य देव

people think that it would have been better to have only one religion in this earth. They think it could have avoided confusion and could have eradicated one of the strongest reasons to divide. Had we started, and probably we did, with one religion, there were bound to be different sects of it at first which could become separate religions eventually. This has actually happened. Without citing examples, it can be seen how within the same religion there are differences in the form of strong sects. This is natural. Man has free will. It is inherent. Even for one religion and one god (or even the God), there are different forms and names. *Allah* has many names. Viṣṇu has thousand, if not more, names. The reason is simple. Once I observed a man in anger who was using abusive language. There was a deluge of verbal abuses coming out almost incessantly. I asked him to stop and suggested that even one name called and one abuse spoken was enough. To this he replied that his anger and anguish was so great that one abuse will not do; hence a plethora of verbal abuses. Likewise, one's love and devotion to a god may not be satiated with one name. So, one may call Viṣṇu by thousand names. In some, especially southern parts of India, every elder likes to give a name to the child resulting in several names of him. This, added to his original place of belonging, makes a very long name for him. One of my colleagues has a name that goes as Tadimalla Venkata Ramlingeswara Subrahmanyam Sharma. A mother, in any part of the world, often calls her baby by several names, especially when expressing her intense love. Some of these names are temporarily used and could be even unintelligible and often funny. The love and affection is so great to make it happen. But she remembers that despite several names given by her to the baby, the baby is one and one only. Ultimately, most of the names are dropped and a few remain. At a stage, even a name is not needed for expression of intense love. That is the essence of it.

Nevertheless, it is advised that one should not choose several gods for devotion as it may lack the desired focus. This is also justified from the viewpoint that the essence of the Supreme is there in every god. What is there in one god is there in another god also. This also means that one should not disrespect other gods whom one has not chosen to be the coveted one for himself. The ultimate aim is to move from "a" god to "the" God or the Supreme.

There does not seem to be anything wrong in selecting any god. However, scriptures are replete and resplendent in advising in this regard. Owing to my core belief in *Vedānta,* I shall selectively cite from *Gītā* to explain it.

Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Gītā* that whosoever worships whichever god, I (Lord Kṛṣṇa) fix the devotion of him in that god.[183] So, one has the freedom of will to decide his/her own course. But, it is to be remembered that through devotion of a god you attain that god. This has been made quite clear in *Gītā*. One who worships a god attains that god; one who worships his ancestors attains them; one who worships ghosts attains the ghosts and one who worships me (Lord Kṛṣṇa), attains Me (Him).[184]

I reiterate that one has to essentially move from "a" god to "the" God. Going indirectly through intermediary sources may take more time for self-realisation. But then, some person may not have the ability to go directly. Many persons need a deity to start with.

11.3.2 DEITY ABANDONMENT?

It is true that many persons need a deity to start with but during self-realisation one learns to abandon the deity and to go towards

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183 यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 7—21 ॥

184 यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्पितॄन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः ।
भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या यान्ति मद्याजिनोऽपि माम् ॥श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 9—25 ॥

the Supreme. Some of the Hindu rituals teach deity abandonment.

Several wise men, including Acharya Rajneesh/Osho, tell us what is really understood by the 'deity abandonment,'[185] which is commonly practised after traditional religious deity-based festivals such as *Durgā Pūjā, Gaṇeśotsava,* etc. The deity is established or commissioned in the beginning of the festival and is abandoned after a period of a few days of worship and devotion. A common man may need some symbol for following devotional way of self-realisation to start with. If one performs real worship for a duration, the deity is no more needed because it is (then) perpetually carried (*dhāraṇa*) in the mental and spiritual world of a true devotee all through. The deity can then be physically abandoned as it is (now) internally borne by the devotee. A real worship leads to physical abandonment of the deity much before than that in case of mere ritualistic worship. That devotee is not a true one and will not evolve who is confined to deity worship only as a ritual. To a real devotee, such-performed deity-abandoning is, hence, not painful as conversely it is to those who have not gone beyond the deity or the physical symbol. Sh. Rajbali Pandey, Ex-Vice Chancellor, Jabalpur University, used to call the true worship as devotion with feelings i.e. *bhāva pūja* as against the mere ritualistic deity worship i.e. *mūrtī pūja.*[186]

11.3.3 STARTING WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

We may embark on the path of piety and devotion in a very simple manner to start with.

One may start with a simple prayer. After the day's work, one should just sit in silence and:

1. Remember, concentrate and meditate on the coveted god.

185 मूर्ति विसर्जन
186 भाव पूजा न कि मूर्ति पूजा ।

2. Say mentally that whatsoever good was done on that day is offered to god.
3. Render an apology and beg the mercy of the god for misdeeds performed inadvertently or with design during the day and ask for courage and righteousness to refrain from misdeeds.
4. Say that give me support and energy to lead the worldly life in a noble way and to do further good things.

We may then go ahead with better means of devotion.

- Better than loud singing is prayer.
- Better than prayer is silent chanting or *japa*[187] in which one has to move from the spoken words to near-silent, silent chanting and mental chanting.
- Better than chanting is meditation or *dhyāna*.
- Better than *dhyāna* is deep meditation or *samādhi*.'[188]

After certain stage, knowledge (*jñāna*) will take one further. The three-fold *sādhanā* comprises *jñāna yoga, bhakti yoga* and *dhyāna yoga*. The final take-off of the mind and the intellect is called *dhyāna* or meditation. It is reiterated that after complete surrender,[189] it is the continuous, steady and unwavering meditation[190] which leads to liberation and bliss.[191]

11.4 The synthesis—Ethical implications of Vedic thoughts as in *Gītā*

Analysis and synthesis are the two main stages and approaches. Analytical approach is followed by researchers and scientists who, after analysis, have to necessarily synthesise to solve a problem. A successful leader, "guru" and manager solve the

187 जप जिसमें बैखरी से मध्यमा से पश्यंति से परा की ओर जायें ।

188 कीर्तन से प्रार्थना, प्रार्थना से वन्दना, वन्दना से जप, जप से ध्यान, ध्यान से समाधि श्रेष्ठ है ।

189 प्रपत्ति

190 ध्रुवास्मृति

191 साक्षात्काररुपा ध्रुवा स्मृतिरेव भक्तिशब्देनाभिधीयते ॥ श्रीभाष्य ॥

problem rather than just analyse it. There are persons who have only analytical approach to life and who entangle the problem. They do not solve a problem, they only study and analyse and sometimes confound it. The elements of analysis can be used to become a radical person, an anarchist, and an atheist or be used as an instrument to unnecessarily sensitise and mislead others. One has to tackle and solve rather than to hang the issue. It is only when analysis blends with synthesis and problem-solving attitude that it becomes worthwhile.

An absence of analysis or loss of analysis will make things too simple. It may be even an ignorant's approach to life in the eyes of those who believe in knowing the details and understanding the intricacies by application of intellect. On the other hand, too much of analysis and no synthesis will certainly make one knowledgeable but make him evolve only to an extent. It will not lead one to any real attainment. It may not lead one anywhere. The analysis has to follow synthesis. It, hence, has to be a combination of the two.

In devotion and spirituality, several paths are indicated, some of which do not seem to converge. Still, a convergence and synthesis has been brought about by those who fully understood different paths and elements thereof. *Gītā* is the glaring example of bringing about such a synthesis where the combination of knowledge with action as well as of knowledge with piety and devoutness has become not only conceivable but also practical.

11.4.1 SYNTHESISING THE ELEMENTS OF VEDIC SCHOOLS

Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, the Song of Lord, has been recognised as one of the three main pillars (*prasthāna trayi*) of *Vedānta* along with *Brahm Sūtra* and *Upaniṣads*. It is upheld as being among the most lucid and revealing exposition of orthodox Indian schools of philosophy combined altogether. *Gītā* has inspired great saints and scholars of not only India like Ādi Śankarācārya and Rāmānujacārya but also scholars of other countries like Walt Whitman. To bring about *Gītā*'s advocated

combination of action and renunciation (*tyāga*) of the fruits of action, Sri Rāmakrishna Paramhansa suggested a simple successive repetition or chanting of the word *Gītā*. By continuous repetition, the word begins to sound like *tyāgi* which means the one who has renunciated (the fruits of action). That is what *Gītā* teaches us to be.

Providing an ethical implication of the *Vedic* thoughts has led to the propounding of *Karma-yoga* as elucidated in *Gītā*. The essence of the *Gītā*'s ethical philosophy is based on *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* in which the doctrine of *Niṣkāma Karma* has been suggested.[192]

Vedic cult, *Upanishadic* or *Vedānta* philosophy, *Sānkhya* etc. have influenced the philosophy of *Gītā*. For example, statment about *ātmā* in *Gītā* (*Gītā*, 2-20) has similarity with the statement from *Kaṭhopaniṣad* (1-2-18).[193] Further, there are common *mantra*s as those from *Śvetaśvatar Upaniṣad* which appear in *Gītā* also.[194]

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192 ईशा वास्यमिद् सर्व यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद् धनम् ॥1॥
कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छत् समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्मलिप्यते नरे ॥2॥ ईशावास्योपनिषद् ॥
न कर्मलिप्यते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 5—7॥

193 न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चि—न्यायं कृतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥
॥कठोपनिषद्, प्र. अध्याय, द्वितीय वल्ली, 18 ॥
न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 2—20॥

194 सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत् सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥
॥ श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्, अध्याय 3, 16 एवं श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 13—13 ॥
सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
॥ श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्, अध्याय 3, 17 एवं श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 13—14 ॥

There is nothing unusual if we find the statements regarding the eternal truth repeated. It reiterates their worth. Moreover, the context at times, in which these are re-established, could be different. Even within *Gītā*, some aphorisms are repeated.[195]

Gītā accepts the psychic analysis and cosmology of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* of *Sānkhya darśana* but rejects its theory of distinctness of separate souls. It advocates unity of all souls into one supreme soul, the *Uttama Puruṣa*. Unlike in *Sānkhya*, where *Prakṛti* is more powerful, *Gītā* states *Prakṛti* to be subservient to *Uttama Puruṣa* who guides the actions of *Prakṛti*.

Let us first understand as to how a component alone could be limiting and how *Gītā* extends and synthesises these components for self-realisation.

11.4.2 THE 'YOGA' ALONE?

Everything has to be in a proper perspective and with a clearly defined goal. The goal is self-realisation. If the path itself becomes important, the goal may get diffused. Then, even 'yoga' would stand reduced to physical exercise with limited advantages. One can control the senses, but the goal is to end the lust and go further. As stated in *Gītā*, the senses could be disallowed to work by not feeding them for some time by force but still the lust may persist; the lust ends only with true knowledge of the self.[196]

11.4.3 ACTION AND WORSHIP ALONE?

Upaniṣad or *Vedānta Darśana* points out that action (*karma*) and worship (*upāsanā*) are secondary. The role of action and worship

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195 उदाहराणार्थ 'मन्मना भव—' ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 10--34 एवं 18—65 ॥

196 विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्ज रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्टा निवर्तते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 2—59 ॥

is limited to the purification of mind and not to the realisation of truth.[197] If it is so then one cannot attain *Brahm* by work and worship only. Nevertheless, work and worship are needed for purity of thoughts and for concentration. All *Vedic karmakāṇḍa* is, thus, also secondary although still important.

Ādi Śankaracarya's *advaita* philosophy considers *karma* and *upāsanā* as secondary but *Gītā* teaches to sublimate the *karma* into 'yoga' and elevates it to be a primary factor in self-realisation. This 'yoga' i.e. integration of work and non-attachment, involves knowledge. Without knowledge, even 'yoga' *per se* is only a physical and mental exercise.

Thus, *Gītā* provides a feasible, possible for all, ethical implication of the *Vedic* thoughts.

11.4.4 ACTION PREFERRED OVER NON-ACTION

All forms of life, i.e. embodied beings cannot live without action. To eschew and abstain from action is not possible for living forms (*Gītā*, 18-11).[198]

Gītā states that the living beings should keep themselves engaged to their normal work and appointed/designated action.[199] No work can be ideal. Each engagement may have some defects. Yet, the normal work has to be carried out. One ought to do his prescribed duty. *Gītā* (18-48) states that the normal and natural work/action, although ridden with (one or the other) faults, is not to be denounced. All works/actions have some (one or the other) faults as the fire has the accompanying (fault of having) smoke.[200] *Gītā* (3-8) does not teach one to be without

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197 चित्तस्य शुद्धये कर्म न तु वस्तूपलब्धये ।
वस्तुसिद्धिर्विचारेण न किचिंत् कर्मकोटिभिः ॥विवेक चूड़ामणि, 11 ॥

198 नहि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः । श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 18—11 ।

199 सहज कर्म एवं नियत कर्म ।

200 सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 18--48 ॥

action but maintains that the designated action is better than non-action.[201]

11.4.5 THE REAL ACTION AND *'YAJÑA'*

Gītā teaches that it is (generally) not possible to be without action/work. The rational query, then, would be as how to act and how to lead our life meaningfully? *Gītā* states that we have to live in this world and execute the action but without being involved and being affected. Afflictions of even the slightest degree are to be kept away.[202]

If we cut a fruit into two parts with a very sharp knife and quickly replace and join the two parts by putting them together, it will appear like one intact fruit while in reality the two parts are actually not attached but separate. The reality is different from appearance. Similarly, when we deliver our worldly duties and perform our prescribed and designated action, we remain joined with the world of matter but we have to remember that yet we are not really attached to that part. The essential spirit of the teachings of *Gītā* is the continuous consciousness of the Absolute while the routine duties of life are discharged without reluctance but with-non attachment.

One has the right to action but not to its results. One has to give up the fruits of action.[203] One is entitled only for performing the action but never the fruits thereof. The person performs work but it is not for his own sake. Then *karma*, a secondary factor, becomes 'yoga,' a primary factor. This 'yoga' involves the technique of a total withdrawal of personality-consciousness and concentrating on the Eternal.

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201 नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म जयायो ह्यकर्मणः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 3-8 ॥

202 'अंजन माहिं निरंजन' रहना ।

203 कर्मणयेवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संगोऽस्तव कर्मणि ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 2-47 ॥

It is believed that in *Vedic* times there were no or a few temples and the practice of *yajña* was prevalent. Ānand Coomāraswāmy observes that the rise of temples or structural shrines represents the softening of the practice of *yajña*. *Yajña* is engaging in the right action. While the worship (especially of a deity or symbol) can be performed through a proxy (*Pūjāri*), *yajña* requires direct personal involvement.

The scriptures mention five forms of *yajña*[204] for the householder or *gṛhastha* viz. (i) worship of God, (ii) adoration of the wise and enlightened ones, (iii) service of the parents and ancestors, (iv) service of the man or social service and (v) service of the other creatures/living beings.

Let us try to understand from the teachings of *Gītā* as to how *yajña* is used to depict right action and what is meant by *yajña*. It states in the *Gītā* that *yajña* is the only real action. Anything other than this is only (a form of) worldly bondage (and nescience).[205] One has to perform *yajña* without non-attachment.

Thus, *yajña* in its true intended meaning denotes performing ordained task comprising all internal processes of contemplation through which one traverses the path that leads to the Supreme.

Several ways and means of accomplishing this ordained task or *yajña* such as regulation and serenity of breath, reflection, sense-restraint, self-control, sacrifice to fire, etc. are mentioned in *Gītā* (4.25 to 4.31). All of them, however, have roots in performing the ordained task and true action which would lead to liberation.[206] Out of these various ways of performing *yajña*, *Gītā* points out as to which one is the best. The knowledge-led

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204 देव यज्ञ, ऋषि यज्ञ, पितृ यज्ञ, नर यज्ञ एवं भूत यज्ञ

205 यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 4—23 ॥

206 एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 4—32 ॥

performance of ordained task i.e. *yajña* is better than matter or material-based *yajña* as all actions culminate in this knowledge-led *yajña* (*Gītā*, 4-33).[207]

Starting from a prescribed and designated action, we have to move towards performing the real action. *Gītā* further elucidates the action or *karma,* in its culminated sense, and defines it as cessation of those causes which bring about one or the other effect(s) in living beings (*Gītā*, 8-3).[208]

This true meaning of action is, alas not understood by many who think that mere continuous engagement in action would lead to salvation. True action is that which brings an end to the causes of desires.

11.4.6 THE MYTH OF ACTION FOR THE GOOD OF ALL LIVING BEINGS

It is to be borne in mind and heart, especially by persons at relatively high level of self-realisation having concern for others, that the work could be for the benefit of people at large but it should not be carried out with the intention of benefiting the people at large. This intention, and not this activity or work, has to be shed off. For a person whose primary engagement is in his own essence,[209] 'none of his work is left to be done'.[210]

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207 श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 4—33 ॥

208 अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्मुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 8—3 ॥
जो संकल्प-विकल्प का विग्रह अर्थात शमन करे वही कर्म है । कर्म के इस गूढ़ार्थ को समझाने के लिये मैं परम पूज्य परमहंस स्वामी जगतमित्रानंद, लम्हेटा घाट, जबलपुर का अनुग्रहीत हूँ। ज्ञातव्य है कि गीता के उपरोक्त श्लोक में ब्रह्म, अध्यात्म एवं कर्म की व्याख्या कर दी गई है।

209 आत्म—रत, आत्म—तृप्त, आत्म—संतुष्ट ।

210 यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, गीता 3—17 ॥

Such an action would be and has to be for the good of all living beings. This is perfectly what Indian philosophy emphasises.[211] In the west, this is known as Altruism i.e. a selfless concern for other people purely for their own sake. Altruism is usually contrasted with selfishness or egoism in ethics.

I have heard people saying, "What is the benefit to me? I am doing this only for the benefit of others." People also are heard saying, "I helped that man earlier and now he is behaving like this. God is there. He will take care of him (punish him!)." The persons making such statements and being benefactor in their own eyes have, in fact, yet to evolve. Such persons do not help others in real sense. Even when they are rendering some help, it is with an expectation of some return. When that expected return, either in the form of materialistic or other forms such as expected respect or mental slavery, does not come through, these pseudo-benefactors become unhappy and some of them could be even in rage.

One has to regard all creatures as the Supreme/God Himself and proceed to serve them with a devout heart instead of taking up the pose of doling out mercy. The guiding principle delves in "work for the world, (only) for your salvation."[212]

Scriptures warn that do not make a don yourself with the pride of a benefactor and concierge for the creatures of this universe? You are just equal to and not greater than them. The work carried out with non-attachment itself benefits people at large. The person, who proclaims, as a routine, that he is working for the benefit of people and does so, is undoubtedly doing a good thing but the fact remains that he has yet to evolve so that the work is not done even with this (good!) attachment and the pride ends.

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211 (अ) सर्वभूतहितेरताः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 5—25 एवं 12—4 ॥

(ब) सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्ति मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥

212 आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्हिताय च ।

11.4.7 DEVOUTNESS ITSELF LEADS TO KNOWLEDGE

As stated earlier, knowledge and faith are not opposed to each other. We need both. Let us take an example; "We do not have relationship with inert;"[213] this is knowledge. "Our true relationship is with the God;" this is faith. Thus, knowledge and faith cannot be sundered. Knowledge is essentially needed but the true action itself would lead to knowledge. Let us see how one moves from action to devotion and then to knowledge.[214] It is to be remembered that when knowledge is dawned, it results in the cessation of all futile actions.

It is sometimes argued that only knowledge can take one further to salvation after the mind becomes pure and clear through devotion. Lord Kṛṣṇa also affirms this fact in *Gītā*. There is nothing purer and greater than knowledge[215]. It is eventually obtained in one's own self (*ātmā*) through (*karma*) 'yoga'. Knowledge makes the actions and their fruits attenuate and wither away. The fire of knowledge burns and ends the actions and effects of actions (*Gītā*, 4-19, 4-33).[216]

But, then, piety/devoutness itself could lead to knowledge (*Gītā*, 4-39).[217] The devotee/conformist, who has mastered the control of his passion, obtains knowledge and then without delay he reaches the pure bliss or the Supreme.

Lord Kṛṣṇa first directs the devout to come to Him leaving all (*Gītā*, 18-66).[218] He, then, assures that those who always

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213 This is for the sake of explanation. The relationship does exist.
पुरुष एवं प्रकृति संबद्ध हैं ।

214 कर्म से उपासना से ज्ञान की ओर ।

215 न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मानि विदन्ति ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 4—38 ॥

216 ....ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं .. ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 4—19 तथा 4—33 ॥

217 श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्धवा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 4—39 ॥

218 सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

worship Him devotedly, attain the knowledge, which leads the devout/devotee to being one with the Supreme.[219] Thus, *Gītā* ascertains that the piety leads to knowledge.

In summary, I would like to narrate an episode or allegory, without bothering about its historical sanctity and occurrence as it dwells in the essence of piety leading to knowledge in a simple way. We know that in *Sānkhya darśana*, the Supreme/Spirit i.e. *Puruṣa* and the Primal Nature i.e. *Prakṛti* are the two major elements finally comprising a total of 25 elements[220] of the Universe. *Gītā* imbibes philosophy of *Sānkhya* and synthesises it with other vital desiderata for ethical implications. In *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa is an embodiment of the *Puruṣa*. How a devotee can understand *Sānkhya Darśana*? Let us see.

Mira Bai is very well known as the renowned saint-poet of India and the world. She desired to meet Swami Haridas, another renowned devout saint. Swami Haridas refused to meet Mira on the ground that he (a *purusa*) does not meet any woman (a *strī*) as a principle (of detachment from the worldly affairs at large). Mira responded to this refusal by sending a message to Swami Haridas, "I am not aware that there is any other *Puruṣa* besides Kṛṣṇa." The devotee-saint Mira, thus, reminded to Swami Haridas the basics of *Sānkhya Darśana* that he (Swami Haridas) is not a *Puruṣa* (man) as only Kṛṣṇa is *Puruṣa* and all others are manifestations of Him or *Prakṛti*, the Primal Nature. Overwhelmed, Swami Haridas is said to have not only met Mira Bai but also confessed that it was a turning point in his viewpoint.

Thus, piety/devoutness itself leads to knowledge.

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 18—66 ॥

219 तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकं ॥
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 10—10 ॥

220 Kindly see Section 5.1., i.e. *Sankhya*.

12

One Becomes and Gets What He Longs for

One tends to become what one thinks. If one longs for a thing, one has a possibility to get it. There are stages of (i) being aware of a thing/stage etc., (ii) longing for it, (iii) making efforts towards it, and (iv) attaining it.[221] A strong desire is essentially needed to become and get what one aims at. Other requisites, then, follow and are taken care of.

Richard Bach[222] states in his book *Illusions—The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah* that "You are never given a wish without also being given the power to make it true. You may have to work for it, however." Also, depending upon your capability, it may take time in terms of years, decades or several births. Have a sustained longing and start moving towards the goal. Work for it righteously, you will get it deservedly. The principle works better for noble goals rather than for base, passionate and flimsy desires.

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* (1-2-16) has a statement to this effect. It means that one gets what one desires for.[223] Therefore, one has to have a strong urge to know the Supreme for the self-realisation. The greatest discovery of mankind ever made is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude.

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221 जानाति, इच्छति, यतते, लभते ।

222 Richard Bach, the author of famous *Jonathan Livingston Seagull.*

223 "यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत्" ॥ कठोपनिषद्, प्रथम अध्याय, द्वितीय वल्ली, 16 ॥

The longing and faith has to be strong and consistent. A weakened faith or reversal may lead to no achievement. A parable is related to illustrate this.

Once a man approached a 'guru.' He wanted to test the power of faith, conviction and will. He would like to have a copper pitcher transformed into a gold pitcher. Seeing the lust in him, the 'guru' did not consider him much of a worthy person or '*supātra.*' However, the 'guru' finally condescended. He warned that a sustained faith, resolution, determination and perseverance are required for this. The 'guru' gave the man a *mantra* to chant. With the copper pitcher in hands, the man started chanting the *mantra.* The minutes went by to make an hour. The hours passed by and the night crept in. It continued and the dawn of the next day was seen approaching. The man started doubting the *mantra.* He came on the verge of declaring it a futile effort. His wish, to this effect, was true and came with a great urge under which he yelled with an absorbed and rapt disgust, 'O pitcher, if it is not to be that you transform into gold then it is better that you turn to the dust.' And lo, the pitcher turned into dust. The 'guru' stated that the time of having the great urge and intent, and the time of having your wish fulfilled had arrived but that very moment you desired the pitcher to be the heap of dust; it became so.

Many of us leave the path and stop going ahead when the destination is just round the corner. That is why, I stated that when a lustful wish, as that in the above fable, needs this much conviction and perseverance, "nothing less than madness will do to reach the supernatural (section 9.5)." The path starts leading to success when most of the fellow travellers have stopped, have started going back and have given up.

Determined persons succeed in myriad ways. The main reason is that they are prepared well and are ready for taking advantage of an opportunity. Even synchro-destiny comes their way in the form of several coincidences and chances. Synchronicity and coincidences help them. They actualise their

potentiality to a greater extent than those who are either not or relatively less determined.

If we have dedication and determination, even the most negative and evil forces will not come in the way. Rather, those will help the determined ones. This is exactly happened to the one who was to offer prayers to the God in a time-bound manner. The devotee says, "I do not miss any prayer. I cannot, because the Satan himself reminds me that the time for offering prayer to God has come, come on, do it timely." The devotee has Satan himself in his service and in service to the God! No wonder! How did it happen? It happened due to devotion, dedication and determination. To begin with, the Satan did not like this particular devotee and determined person. He attempted to divert him from God. He, through his Satanic power, made the devotee sleep when the time for offering the prayer came. When the devotee got up, he repented so much that he became closer to God than before. Satan learnt a lesson of not to dissuade him from making prayer. The fear of the Satan was that if the next time this devotee misses the prayer, he will be very close to God owing to his repentance. Satan decided that he would not allow this to happen again. Satan, then, started reminding the devotee of the time for prayer. Dedication and determination can lead to such happenings. No one then comes in your way of self-realisation.

13

False Pride—the Most Dreaded Enemy

The five cardinal vices are lust, anger, worldly attachment, greed, and false pride.[224] It is by overcoming these that one can move towards salvation.

"Five thieves who live within this body are lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. They rob us of ambrosia, but the egocentrics do not understand it and no one listens to their cries" (Guru Amar Das, *Sorath*).

"I am in the Refuge of the Lord; Bless me, O Lord with your grace, so that the lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego may be destroyed" (Guru Arjan Dev, *Gauri Sukhmani*).

Of all the five obstacles, in the way of self-realisation, the false pride is the last to go. Among false pride itself, the pride that one has knowledge is still the last to go. Even accomplished persons sometimes cannot be free from this. It is stated in *Kenopaniṣad* (third Section) that how the gods/*devatas* had the pride emanating from their victory over their enemies. And, to eradicate this egoism, the *Brahm* Himself came before them in the form of a *Yakṣa*. The Fire-god could not burn a straw given by the *Yakṣa* and the Air-god could not blow that straw even an inch. They along with other gods realised their limit and shed off their false pride.

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224 काम, क्रोध, मोह, लोभ एवं अहंकार

The ego and resultant desire to control is often expressed in the words "I" and "want." In virtually every deed, every sentence and in every thought, we have either expressed or hidden "I" and "want." Paradoxically, the "I" in you wants peace. Nevertheless, to get peace you have first to get rid of the "I" and "want".[225]

The *jñāna* is not true *jñāna* if it has even a trace of this false pride or *dambh*. Humility is the hallmark of a really knowledgeable person. A purposeless pursuit of knowledge just for its sake is all right but still evolved are those who have a purpose for pursuing the knowledge. Mere knowledge, *kora jñāna* or *suṣka jñāna*, has other dangers as well. It may make a person what some prominent gurus call as "a person stinking with false pride of knowledge" or having *jñāna dambh*. An episode as given in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is related to illustrate this.

Shwaitaketu was a *'Brahmin'* boy who was sent by his father, Āruni Uddālak, to a 'guru' to learn. The father maintained that it is not by birth that one becomes a knowledge-seeking and knowledge-possessing person or *Brāhmin*. It is by one's deeds that one becomes so. That is why, a *'Brāhmin'* is called *dvija* i.e. having two births. The biological birth is to be followed by spiritual birth, otherwise one is not a *'Brahmin'* only by biological birth. The contrary, may, however, be true. That means that the latter birth is more important than the former. Shwaitaketu was an excellent scholar and learned all what he could. While leaving the *gurukula*, he enquired if anything is left to be learnt from his 'guru.' There was none, he was told. He came back full with false

225 A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. 2003. Value system for the enlightened citizen. *Times of India* (Dt. 18.07.2003). (Reflections after the sojourn to Tawang, one of the world's oldest Buddhist monasteries and a virtual Shangri-La tucked away at an altitude of 3,000 metres in a misty corner of Arunachal Pradesh).

pride of knowledge[226] or having *jñāna dambh.*[227] When he reached home, the father realised that the learning was not complete as a lot of false pride was displayed by Shwaitaketu. The father, then, taught him further and shed-off the pride.

There is another episode that indicates a way to be away from having any pride. Satyakām (the legendary speaker of truth who, and also his mother Jabal, did not hide his being born of an unknown father) was given 400 cows by his 'guru' who asked him that he should go to a place where there are no human beings around, should take care of and live with the cows and return when the number of cows grows up to a thousand.[228] He spent years doing this and finally got so evolved that he even forgot to note when the number of cows grew up to 1000 and forgot to return. Eventually, he was informed by a bull that the herd has now grown to 1000 and he could go back to his 'guru'. When he arrived at the *gurukula*, it was apparent that he has not even a trace of false pride and was truly a learned man now. It establishes that to have a false pride you have to have another person around. If two persons are not there one cannot show-off. How long one can be a narcissus and keep on appreciating himself while being all alone? That is the reason why Satyakām was asked to be away from human beings and live with the cows. You cannot show your *pāṇḍitya* to cows. With no man around, you can look into the cows' eyes. That is what you have mostly to see and be with. Your false pride will, then, become vestigial and will be eventually shed-off. That is what happened. It is stated in the scripture that Satyakām was taught by entities other than man and the first lesson was given by a bull. On return of Satyakām, the *guru* found him enlightened with knowledge (*Chāndogyopaniṣad*, 4/9).

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226 छान्दोग्योपनिषद्, 6/1.

227 ज्ञान दंभ ।

228 छान्दोग्योपनिषद्, 4/4.

The feeling that I have renunciated the worldly things and I am free could also lead to false pride. This is termed as "false pride of renunciation" or *tyāga dambh.*[229] It is very difficult to shed it off. Some people who have renunciated and repudiated (almost) every thing are still left with the feeling and pride that "I have abandoned everything" and "I am free." In fact, the renunciation is not complete till one has not renunciated this false pride or *ahaṃkāra.*

229 त्याग दंभ ।

14

Living Moment by Moment

The grasp/clutch of the time is tremendous. It equally affects living and non-living objects. If you are beyond time, you are beyond universe. You are, then, free from all bondage.

A mortal being must remember that he does not have time, at least not enough time. Our stipulated lifespan is a mere flash in the vast eternity of time and space of the universe. There is no time to waste but more than that one should know that there is no time to live also. If there is no time or not enough time for good things, how can there be time for unwanted things?

People often say that once they complete a particular task, they shall resort to spirituality. They are never free because when one task is complete, another one pops up. Self-realisation is sought not necessarily by renunciation but by striking a co-existence of ordained task and the quest to evolve. People keep on preparing for life. In this process of preparation, they forget to live. In true sense, such persons never really live. If one wastes time only in setting the cord and tuning of a musical instrument, there shall be no time left for really playing it to perform.

The super-natural does not allow and provide mortals with more than a moment. One moment at a time has a possibility to add up in order to make days, months, years, decades and centuries, but nothing is guaranteed beyond a moment. You have one moment only at your disposal, nothing more than that. You can be sure of the current moment only.

You do not know what will happen the next moment. One has to, hence, lead her/his life moment by moment. If we absorb this truth that I have this single moment to live and not beyond, as the next moment is unsure, our way of living will change. We would, then, value not only each day but also each moment of our life and righteously savour it. Our indulgence in superfluous things will cease, as we will have to make the best of the moment we are with. Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

I maintain that unwise are those who abandon the present moment wishing a great pleasure in future. No pleasure could be there, as it cannot be guaranteed to be there, for you in future. There is no "Shangri La," of the type you long for, in this world. It is not waiting for you round the corner. You have to make your own "Shangri La" and you have this moment to start and probably this moment to end it.

Salvation may not be there after your death if you have not started building it in your life. The immortal achievements are founded in mortal engagements but of the right kind. *Upaniṣads* say that *Brahm* can be achieved and is achieved here[230] in this earth and in this (human) birth. It is possible only when the limited time of life is utilised efficiently.

You cannot waste time to experiment; to take up unwanted *bhoga*s first and self-realisation later. It is those who waste time, complain about life being too short and moan that the life seemed to end just when we were getting ready for it. The stoic philosopher Seneca[231] says, "It is not that we have too short a time to live, but that we waste a lot of it. ... Life is long enough and sufficiently generous amount has been given to us for the highest achievements if it were well invested." He,

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230 इहैव तदाप्नोति; अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ।

231 'On the Shortness of Life", written by Seneca in (about) AD 49.

thus, pre-empted Parkinson's[232] Law that says "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion."

Seneca laments on time-killers and procrastinators, and asks, "Why are you idle? Unless you seize the day, it will flee. Even though you seize it, it still will flee. Therefore, you must vie with time's swiftness in the speed of using it."

Bhishma, the *Pitāmaha* or grandsire as he is known, stated on his death-bed of arrows, "Do not wait for tomorrow for you never know what will happen then. Do now what you would do tomorrow. That is wisdom."

So do not wait. Where is the time to learn belatedly? As Nike says, "Just do it." It is a paradox that we moan on short expectancy of life and yet depend on the morrow and waste today. We should take and plan everyday as if it were our last. We should neither long for nor fear the morrow.

You have to live this moment because that is all you have with you for sure. Living in the future is just as precarious as living in the past. If you take care of the present moment, you have taken care of the past as well as future. You have this and this moment only. Use it for self-realisation.

Let's Keep Layman P'ang's admonition in mind.[233]
"The past is already past. Don't try to regain it!
The present doesn't stay.
Don't try to touch if from moment to moment!
The future has not yet come,
Don't think about it beforehand!"

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232 Parkinson, Cyril Northcote (1958). *Parkinson's law, or the pursuit of progress.* London: John Murray, ISBN: 071951049X/978-0-7195-1049-6

233 Cited from *The Diamond Sword*, a collection of talks by Kongo Roshi, Zen Buddhist Temple of Chicago, First Edition 1987, Second Edition 1992,pp 19-23.

15

The Principle of Pendulum—Equal Swing towards both the Ends

Oscillation is fascinating to be seen and self-experienced. It is difficult for a child to resist the riding of a swing. So is the case for grown-ups as well who want to ride the swing of the worldly pleasure. We are all child of nature but that does not mean that we have to keep on behaving like a child. We chase, acquire and accumulate the pleasure-giving sources/causes of all possible forms. In doing so, we keep on mounting to one end of the swing. And then the (backward) movement to other end starts.

One cannot be selective in the results of deeds. The deeds directed towards attaining a pleasure may and will swing, in time to come, towards the other alternative i.e. the pain. Same is true of the intensity or order of pleasure. Today, when one is enjoying the pleasure with a high intensity, he has to be ready to eventually suffer from the pain with nearly the same intensity.

You have scaled a height. If you fall, it will be from that attained height. The greater the height, the heavier the fall. If you are on the crest, you may feel crestfallen one day. It is easy to get a first rank sometimes, but it is difficult to maintain first rank throughout. It is not the height but the way the height is maintained that matters. If the height is used to amass mere worldly pleasure and overlooking the greater aim of self-realisation, there will be an imbalance. Conveniences could

probably be all right but passion is not. Height itself is not to be dreaded of. One should not become a victim of unnecessary altophobia. But a balance is needed. If things are balanced, you will not fall.

I have seen disciples weeping in agony when the 'guru' has shed off his mortal body and left for his heavenly abode. If a disciple weeps when the 'guru' leaves, the disciple has not undergone real realisation. He has, then, to suffer from the swing of the pendulum. We may not be in despair if we get attached to the principles and values for which the 'guru' or the elder stood and not to his mortal being.

From the full and (often) irregular and wobbled swing, the first attempt should be to move towards a regular, smooth and small swing. The smoothest swings are those emanating from piety and devotion. The pleasure and pain may still be there but of a higher order. There are different types of pleasures. Similarly, there are different types of pains. The spiritual pleasure is considered to be the highest followed by the mental pleasure, whereas the body-related or sense-related pleasure is at the base and should be denounced as far as possible despite the 'nature of the beast' we all have in us. In piety and devotion, the swing is such that these pains and pleasures approach the state of bliss.

In the higher state of self-realisation, the swing starts reducing. The path of realisation through discriminative knowledge is such that eventually and ultimately one gets neither pleasure nor pain. One is above pleasure and pain. Thus, the swing of the pendulum is minimised. Through practice, one reaches the state of mental equipoise (*sthiti pragyata*). The swing, then, is nil.

16

The Mind, Brain and Body

The mind, brain (a part of body) and body have to be in harmony for their functioning towards self-realisation.

16.1 The body

Body is a broad term. Three main forms of the body could be (i) gross body, (ii) subtle body, and (iii) causal body.[234] The gross body performs actions, thoughts occur in the subtle body, and steadiness, deep meditation and/or trance is a function of the causal body. Many a times, a person remains involved with the gross body only and does not move towards subtle and causal body as desired. Some elders, as late Swāmi Ramsukhdās, even advised to negate and denounce the body. This is not easy for all to do. At least, the body should be controlled. The body should be rightly engaged. One way is to keep the body busy in the service of the family to start with, and eventually in the service of the society and the world. Negation of the body is not easy. The other course left is to manage and control the body. Let us see how this could be possible.

16.2 Are the mind and body of human beings one unit?

The mind and body are inter-related to the extent of being considered as one unit. The mind affects the body and the body may affect the mind. Functionally, both are to be regarded as one

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234 स्थूल देह, सूक्ष्म देह, लिंग देह ।

unit. Many medical experts like Dr. Alfred J. Canter,[235] M.D, believe that mind and body are one unit and the separation does not exist in fact, but does so only on a verbal level. The mind cannot exist without the body. One cannot have a body without some kind of 'mind.'

Some, however, feel that body and mind are two different entities; whereas the body is cellular and molecular, i.e. physical and is subject to laws of chemistry, physics and physiology, the mind or consciousness or soul is psychic, spiritual or metaphysical. They also believe that mind is not an equiphenomenon of brain and, in certain cases, the former can do without the latter![236] Thus, they differentiate between brain and mind. According to them, brain and body can be one unit but not the mind and body.

The subconscious mind, controlling involuntary functions, has its home in hypothalamus/thalamus of the brain. The conscious mind, i.e. the thinking region, controls voluntary functions and lies in the cortex of the brain.[237] On the other hand, some think that hypothalamus serves as the seat of the 'soul,' consciousness or sentience![238, 239]

The brain—a part of body, is not only a complicated structure; it is a very complex system. The brain is an electric machine. It is also a chemical machine. Every sensation is

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235 Canter, Alfred J 1965. *Unitrol: The Healing Magic of the Mind*. Parker Publi. Co., Inc., N.Y. pp. 1-192.

236 B.K. Jagdish Chander 1998. *Eternal Drama of Souls, Matter and God: Part-I Souls*. Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishva-Vidyalaya, Pandava Bhavan, Mount Abu, Rajasthan. Pp. 1-268. (pp. 53-56 in particular)

237 This is over-simplification made for easy understanding.

238 B.K. Jagdish Chander 1998. Ibid. Pp. 1-268. (pp. 102-131 in particular)

239 Sentience is the awareness of or feeling the quality of emotional response, distinguished from intellectual processes.

recorded in our nervous system. Every word, every sight and every sound of our past may, thus, continue to act on our body. Our neuronal pool in the brain has memories, which arouse emotions that could be pleasant or unpleasant.

16.3 Brain craves for information

The brain craves for information as the body craves for food. All human interactions, social meetings and gossips are the result of this craving. If we provide our brain with right type of engagement and information, we shall save ourselves from base indulgences. That is one of the most significant ways of managing it as well. Truly, "an idle mind is the devil's workshop." One should keep learning. It engages the brain in a right manner.

16.4 Thalamus vs. cortex of the brain

Let us know, by over-simplification, about some major parts of the brain and as to how do they act. The thalamus, or more correctly the hypothalamus, is the 'emotional zone' or 'feeling region.' The cortex is the 'intelligence zone' or the 'thinking region.'

It is necessary to regulate such actions, that are based on the impulses received from the thalamus. One should desirably delay before reacting to any disturbing stimulus. This gives one a chance to evaluate the impulses coming from the thalamus. This delay gives the 'thinking region' of our brain a chance to consider the possibilities of action when one is emotionally disturbed. Our reactions should, therefore, be delayed until the impulse has passed to the thalamus first, to the cortex second, and then returned to the thalamus.

We have to remember that in animals, the action is largely based on impulses of the thalamus. In human beings, one has a chance to get it judged by the cortex. Our action could be either impulsive or based on a reason. It could be based on reason only when we give it a chance to get it examined by the

cortex. Thus, one has to decide whether he wants to act like an animal or like a human being. If we want to behave like a human being, we have to give the cortex a chance to judge the situation.

16.5 The three divisions of the brain: animalistic to humane nature

There is a great relevance of Paul MacLean's divisions of the brain in stress management. These divisions are three in number.

1. The reptilian brain (the crocodile brain section)
2. The paleo-mammalian brain (the horse brain section)
3. The neo-mammalian brain (the human brain section)

The reptilian brain is just near and connected to the stem and is hypothalamus. The paleo-mammalian brain surrounds it and is between the two sections. The neo-mammalian brain is the cortex respectively. It surrounds the paleo-mammalian brain and is towards periphery.

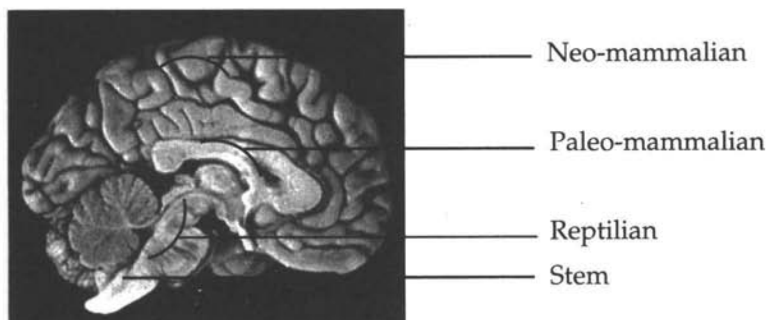


Figure 2. Three divisions of the brain (figurative only)

These three sections are also referred to as amygdala, the hippocampus and the cerebral cortex respectively.[240] The reptilian

240 Alisa Smith. 2006. How to master panic and survive. *Readers' Digest*. Jan. 2006 Issue. Pp. 105-115. (Refers to Dr. Diane McIntosh, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry).

brain is primitive and animalistic and has the tendencies like crocodile. It has the tendencies to defend life impulsively. It imparts impulses. The paleo-mammalian brain is like an evolved mammal such as a horse. These two together control most of the involuntary functions. It is truly said that man possesses the 'nature of the beast.' The reptilian and paleo-mammalian brain sections are responsible for this 'nature of the beast.' This primitive nature has to be controlled by the reason.

The neo-mammalian brain is the thinker. It imparts reasoning. It rationalises the impulses. The neo-mammalian brain not only rationalises, but also decides future course of realisation. This part of the brain has the capacity to evolve the brain itself and the manifestations to follow. The power of reasoning lies in allowing the capacity and capability of the cortex and neo-mammalian brain to be utilised fully by human beings. This will lead to a rational, moral and spiritual behaviour and to the ultimate self-realisation of a person.

16.6 Can even involuntary functions of body be controlled?

Man apparently controls all voluntary actions such as lifting of an arm. It was thought that involuntary actions such as heart beat, pulse rate, oxygen intake rate, etc. cannot be controlled at will. However, it is now known that through 'yoga' even the involuntary actions are controlled.

The subconscious mind has its home in hypothalamus/thalamus. The conscious mind is in the cortex. These have their own schizo-physiology to affect the body and mind, and ultimately the life of human beings. We can even order the subconscious mind in a variety of ways including that through 'yoga.' This can make us free from many psycho-somatic diseases and ailments.

Laughing is a unique human phenomenon.[241] It has not been observed in other mammals. Laughing is defined as a successive rhythmic spasmodic expiration with open glottis and vibration of the verbal folds. It could also be defined as a series of spasmodic and partly involuntary expirations with inarticulate vocalisation. Thus, laughing is partly involuntary. It can be controlled in the sense that one can order oneself to laugh and, then, the laughing occurs by practice. The centre of laughing, although not far from the stem, responds to laughing by efforts without any apparent cause and just by ordering the brain to do so. It could greatly impart a relief from the stress. Several *yogīs* practice it daily.

Several well recorded experiments and their results have indicated that through 'yoga' and will-power, even the involuntary actions can be controlled. Most cited among these experiments are Anand's 'Yogī' and Neal Miller's 'Rats and Patients' who succeeded in controlling not just the lower regions of the brain but also the most horse-like and crocodile-like internal functions of the body. An experiment was conducted at the AIIMS, New Delhi, India in the year 1961 and repeated under camera and monitored strictly at the behest of the British Broadcasting Corporation,[242] London in the year 1970 by Drs. Anand, G.S. Chhina and Baldev Singh on a *rājayogī*, Shri Ramanand Yogī, from Andhra Pradesh. The *yogī* was put in a sealed glass box with regulated oxygen supply. A band of electronic gadgets were connected to his head and body to monitor the responses. The *yogī* could significantly lower his oxygen needs by putting himself in some kind of a trauma.

There have been instances of getting a patient operated without anaesthesia, sometimes compulsively and sometimes by

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241 Fredric R. Stearns. 1972. *Laughing*. Thomas Publi., Springfield, Illinois. Pp. 1-73.

242 Nigel Calder. 1970. *The mind of man*. British Broadcasting Corporation Publi., 35 Marylebone High Street, London WIM 4HA. Pp. 1-288.

a mistake. All such experiments show that 'yoga' can control almost all functions of the body. Additional support to this fact has come from several new experiments conducted in recent times as well. It is to be remembered that these were not the tests of endurance but the tests of control of 'mind over matter.'

16.7 We can manage and even control our subconscious

The 18th century Tibetan Yogī Chekawa observed:

This mind that is full of faults,
Has one great quality,
That it does whatever it is taught.

The subconscious mind is the primitive and ancient level of mind. It controls all involuntary functions such as rate of heartbeat, level of blood pressure, secretion of all important endocrine glands and in summary, to a great extent, all functions outside of voluntary command. The conscious mind, on the other hand, is relatively recent and is the thinking level present in the cortex and is responsible for voluntary functions.

It is thought that one probably cannot reach the subconscious and cannot have a dialogue with it for improvement. We have seen how even some involuntary functions can be controlled by us. Likewise, it is possible to reach, manage and control the subconscious to a sizeable extent. Let us see how this can be done.

The subconscious mind is believed to accept general commands. It is obedient and unquestioning. It acts more on emotional feelings and motivations. It is susceptible to repetition. It accepts and acts upon positive affirmations free from 'ifs' and 'buts.'

In view of the above characteristics of the subconscious mind, we can attempt to contact, manage and order it in the following ways:[243]

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243 Interested persons may refer to the books cited in this chapter.

- Give a general command. The command should be simple and should not have unnecessary details.
- Make the command with an emotional motivation rather than with reason.
- Repeat and repeat and repeat the command.
- Do not pass on any doubt with the command. No 'ifs' and 'buts' have to be there. Give a command with positive affirmation.

The above are my personal experiences and beliefs and may not be taken as panacea, singly or totally. Nothing is promised.[244]

244 Kindly read the disclaimer.

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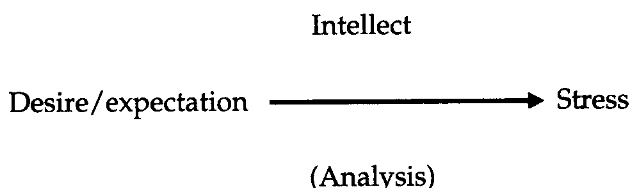
Stress and its Management

17.1 The concept of 'stress'

In ancient Indian literature, stress is mentioned as *dukha, kleśa, ādhi, pragyāprādha,* etc. The three types viz. *Adhyātmic* (personal), *adhibhautic* (situational) and *adhidevic* (environmental) are mentioned. Mind-body relationship has been well established. The relation of stress with *vāta, pitta* and *kapha* (similar to modern association with diseases, stress physiology and stress endocrinology) have been made. The spiritual dimension of stress has been spelt out. A person is advised to get rid of stress by having self-realisation, so as to develop one's personality and inner self and evolve from physical to mental to spiritual being. Non-drug approach i.e. yoga (relaxation, breathing control, *āsanas,* meditation, etc.) is emphasized.

In modern times, the concept of stress was first introduced in life sciences by Hans Selye in 1936. Derived from Latin word *stringere,* stress meant hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. In common parlance, 'strain' and 'stress' are used synonymously. Stress includes meanings connoted by both stimulus-oriented and response-oriented (physiological and behavioural) viewpoints along with etiological and psychodynamic viewpoints.

Stress may be mostly the result of desire (or expectation) and its analysis, for possibility of its realisation, by the intellect of an individual.



For example, if an elderly man at the age of 59 desires to become a Wimbledon champion in tennis and no matter how hard he works towards this goal, the intellect will make him understand that he cannot make it. This will lead to stress as long as the desire is there.

Stress may be defined as (i) a response to a perceived threat, challenge or change, (ii) a physical and psychological response to any demand, or, (iii) a state of psychological and physical arousal. Stress is also defined as the wear and tear of life caused by excessive demand on body-mind system.

The term 'burnout' is generally used for stress owing to a job being and felt heavy. Burnout is response to interpersonal stressors on the job mainly due to an overload of work and/or contact with people resulting in BOSS (burnout stress syndrome). BOSS is a condition brought about by unrelieved work-stress. There are five progressive stages of burnout viz. honeymoon stage, fuel shortage stage, chronic symptom stage, crisis stage and hitting the wall stage. Non-work life, organisational climate, coping styles, etc. determine the intensity of burnout.

17.2 Stress tolerance limit

Stress tolerance limit (STL) may vary with the individuals and situations. One's genetic constitution, interaction with environment comprising past experiences and life events may all affect the STL. Generally, STL is composed of four vital components:

1. Depression proneness: An emotional state of dejection, feeling of worthlessness and guilt accompanied by apprehension.
2. Anxiety proneness: State of emotional tension characterized by apprehension, fearfulness and psychic pain.
3. Anger: Mild anger may increase energy levels and performance through the increased release of adrenaline but chronic or "trait'-anger may wear down the body.
4. Type-A behaviour pattern: A personality profile characterized by speed, impatience, desire for achievement and perfectionism.

Whereas other terms may be well understood, the 'Type-A' behaviour needs to be elaborated to be understood easily.

17.3 The 'type-A' personality

Cardiologists Meyer Friedman and Ray H. Rosenman (1974)[245] noticed extreme anxiousness in some patients and referred to it as "Type A." The Type A personality has the following characteristics:

- An intense sense of time urgency
- An aggressive personality
- An intense achievement motive: High degree of competitiveness, drive and impatience for results
- Polyphonic behaviour—involvement in multiple and diverse tasks at the same time

The Type A is generally believed to be more prone to coronary heart and other diseases. The persons belonging to this type have to be careful to moderate their responses in order to avoid and manage the stress and lead a healthy life.

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245 'Type A 'Behavior and Your Heart:' Hardcover, Knopf Publishing Group, ISBN 0394480112 (0-394-48011-2)

17.4 Life events stress

A positive relationship exists between stressful life events and subsequent illness of mind and body. Life events scales have been given by different authors e.g. death of near and dear ones, theft or robbery etc.

17.5 Organizational role stress

The conflicts owing to the role of an individual in an organization would lead to stress. It could be role-space or role-set conflict.

17.5.1 ROLE-SPACE CONFLICTS

Role space has three variables viz. the self, the role under question and the other roles an individual plays. A person plays different roles such as a father at home, a manager in the office, secretary of a club, etc. All these roles constitute role-space. These different roles do not exist in isolation and are related. At a given time, any two or more roles may be in harmony or may be in disharmony leading to role-space conflicts. The person's own concept about a role may also be different from what he actually is playing. The role-space-conflicts could be of the following types:

- Inter-role distance: Conflict between organizational and non-organizational roles.
- Role stagnation: Feeling of being stuck; no opportunity to move up.
- Self-role distance: Organisational role against self-concept; mismatch between the person and the job.

17.5.2 ROLE-SET CONFLICTS

A role-set of other people who attempt to define parts of the role of a focal person. Each member of the role-set has role expectations regarding how the focal person will discharge his or

her role (Katz and Kahn, 1966).[246] This leads to role-set conflicts such as:

- Role ambiguity: Lack of role clarity.
- Role expectation conflict: Differing expectations from peers, superiors, subordinates.
- Role overload conflict: Too many/much qualitative and quantitative expectations.
- Role erosion: A function belonging to a person is performed by or transferred to another.
- Resource inadequacy: Inadequate resources for performing the expected functions.
- Personal inadequacy: Person feels not having necessary expertise or skills.
- Role isolation: Absence of strong linkages of one's role with other roles.

17.6 Positive role of stress

Each individual needs a moderate amount of stress to be alert and capable of functioning.[247] Stress potential of creative personality lies in his courage and independence, risk-taking, determination, inquisitiveness, lack of leisure due to hard continued work, etc. Only that much and that type of stress for positive growth is needed. Although this type of stress is included in stress *sensu stricto*, the intent of real stress and its alleviation excludes this type of stress. Continuous high stress even for a good cause may not be desirable in the long run and has to be controlled and managed.

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246 Daniel Katz and Robért Louis Kahn 1966. *The Social Psychology of Organizations*. New York: Wiley, 18-33. OCLC 255184.

247 Pestonjee, D.M 1999. *Stress and Coping – The Indian Experience*. Second Edition. Sage Publications, Delhi. Pp. 1-322.

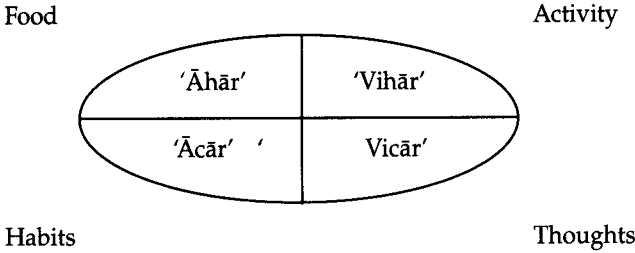
17.7 Strategies to cope with stress

Coping may be appraisal-focused, problem-focused or emotion-focused. It may have two dimensions viz. (i) externality, where the external forces are regarded as responsible for stress, and (ii) internality, where the person herself/himself thinks that she/he is responsible for stress. The mode of coping could be (i) reactive strategy i.e. avoiding the situation, or (ii) proactive strategy i.e. confronting and approaching the problem. Some experts like Rosenzweig have, similarly, classified the mode of coping into two viz. (i) avoidance or 'punitive' mode, and (ii) approach or 'persistive' mode.

The following eight coping strategies could be adopted.

1. Impunitive: Statements indicating either simple admission of stress, or that stress is unavoidable and nothing can be done about it.
2. Intropunitive: Statements indicating self-blame or aggression towards one's self for causing stress.
3. Extrapunitive: Statements expressing aggression towards or putting blame on others for a particular stressful situation.
4. Defensive: Statements expressing either denial of stress or rationalization of stress by giving reasons for it.
5. Impersistive: Statements indicating that the respondent is optimistic and hopes that time would solve the problem and things would work out well in future.
6. Intropersistive: Statements indicating that the role occupant himself/herself should take action to deal with stress.
7. Extrapersistive: Statements indicating that the person expects that someone else would contribute to the solution of the problem or deal with stress.
8. Interpersistive: Opposite of defensive style; Statements indicating that a solution of the problem can be obtained by joint efforts in which the role occupant and others would be involved.

The most enduring coping strategy is to have life style enrichment of a person in a way that the stresses affect him the least. A balanced life has to be led and the components viz. food (*'āhār'*), action/activity (*'vihār'*), habits (*'ācār'*) and thoughts (*vicār'*) have to be right/righteous. *Gītā* states that he who has regulated his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work, can mitigate all material pains.[248]



17.8. Tips to manage stress

I have undergone stress of several kinds and intensities. These included disturbed adolescence, declared cancer in case of my wife, progress of my children, alleged illegality of my constructed house, continuous blood vomiting and prolonged illness of the self, getting cheated to the tune of lakhs of rupees, etc. I have experienced these personally and have managed them by self-practice, learning from the books and scriptures and through the counsel of the elders and doctors. I have come to the conclusion that a score of following tips could be followed as feasible, which would bring a great, if not complete, relief from the stress.

- Live in the present, and not in the past. Accept the things you cannot change. They are finished. They are in the past. Leave them there. Painful souvenirs are to be forgotten and even destroyed. I reiterate that "live in the present."

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248 युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु । युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 6-17 ॥

- Do not brood over it. Take it out. Confide in (selectively).
- Do not try to escape by indulging in smoking, drinking, etc.
- Do not sit in dark. Combined effect of darkness and low temperature may increase the stress. Coming out in open space and being with nature and people helps a lot rather than sitting in a confined place alone. Most of the acute traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress can be reduced by cognitive behaviour, exposure therapy and narration of the incident to our near and dear ones.
- Your home is your refuge. While at home, surround yourself with what you like and love, and that which promotes positive thinking.[249] It could be the chosen and cheerful friends, family members, pets, plants and flowers, a hobby, etc.
- If chosen correctly, the mellifluous notes of music have amazingly soothing effect. Resort to it, in cases where you can. Remember, not only the combined melody but even the individual notes of music have symbolic meaning as they evoke varied moods. Select it carefully.
- A regular exercise, a good hobby, intake of just sufficient food, rest and talking to a good friend or family member may greatly reduce the occurrence and intensity of stress.
- Laughing is a unique human phenomenon. Try to laugh daily. It will prepare you to endure stress and deal with it when the stress comes.
- Words are not the things, states Alfred J. Canter while describing his method of "Unitrol."[250] Do not be afraid of certain words. Analyse the exact situation for which the label of a word

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249 "Positive Thinking," - the phrase was made famous by Norman Vincent Peale in his 1952 best-seller, *The Power of Positive Thinking*. It is simply another term for belief in oneself and faith in God.

250 Canter, Alfred J 1965. *Unitrol: The Healing Magic of the Mind*. Parker Publi. Co., Inc., N.Y. pp. 1-192.

is used. Stop reacting to the labels as if they were things. For example, cancer of Mr. X, Mr. Y and Mr. Z may be altogether different and all cancers are not fatal.

- Manage your subconscious by ordering it through simple and repetitive messages meaning "all is well," "it is not that bad" etc. Selective amnesia can also be probably achieved for undesirable and painful experiences.
- Avoid hasty action. Delay, wherever possible, before reacting to any disturbing stimulus. Reason it out by allowing the situation to go to your cortex portion of the brain for evaluation rather than listening to the thalamus/ hypothalamus portion of the brain only. In contrast to the amygdala or hypothalamus portion of the brain where blind fear may be introduced, the hippocampus and the cerebral cortex may reason it out and offer alternatives to blind fear.[251,252] Follow the old saying of counting upto 10 before taking action or retorting when disturbed. Also, remember that "fools do indeed rush in where angels fear to tread." Do not make haste unnecessarily.
- God has given you many things but not everything. Nobody has everything. Yet people have many things. You should accept this and be happy with several virtues you have. Your glass is filled to a great extent. Sometimes one stretches one's arms towards the far-flung stars in a vain effort to grab them forgetting the beautiful flowers, which are blossoming that very time at one's own feet, so very near.
- If the desire is linked to a time-bound achievement/ performance, try your best till you can. If you fail, after you

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251 Kindly see the previous section of this book, "The Mind, Brain and Body."

252 Alisa Smith. 2006. How to master panic and survive. *Readers' Digest*. Jan. 2006 Issue. Pp. 105-115. (Refers to Dr. Diane McIntosh, Professor of Clinical Psychiatry).

have done your best, accept it with the satisfaction that you sincerely made efforts for the goal.

- Everything cannot go your way. Take the things in stride. It is not only the common man who suffers through hard times. Almost all gods and great men have undergone great periods of adversities. Accept this in your heart of hearts.
- Everybody has had, including some gods, a share of humiliation. History is replete with it. You are not the only one to have it. Moreover, is it not that we meet humiliation in order to grow and evolve?
- The efforts you make to deserve happiness may or may not make you happy. But, you would certainly be happy if you decide to be happy irrespective of situations and status. So, decide to be happy now.
- Nobody can trouble you as much as you can do (to) yourself. Be kind to yourself. Respect yourself. This is achieved by overcoming one's own mind and senses. As *Gīta* says, 'do not trouble yourself.'[253] Your best friend is 'you' yourself and your worst enemy is also 'you' yourself. The only person, who is always with you during your entire life, is 'you' yourself.
- Save your imagination and flight of thoughts for a good cause rather than for over-estimation of the apprehension. Reduce your over-estimation of fear by asking a series of "So what?" The tide will ebb down.
- Do not be afraid of tears. Tears will happen. They are like safety-valves. They let the steam off. It is good to have tears. Have tears, forget them and move on.
- In most of the cases, the ultimate penalty, punishment or bad result is much less inflicting than the pain caused by the fear

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253 उद्धरेदात्मनाऽत्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मानो बन्धुर् आत्मैव रिपुरात्मानः ॥श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 6—5 ॥

of having it. The only way to get rid of it is to go through it. A child injected upon with a syringe on a short notice undergoes less period of fear than the other child, who is informed of it two days in advance, does. You are not a child. So even if you are informed in advance, you know that actual suffering will be much less. Do not inflate it. And, never inflate it just to feign or show it to others that you take it very seriously.

- Do not be afraid of consequences. There is nothing to fear. You could emerge more powerful after undergoing fear. Fear, in its sublimation, eventually leads to courage. Have courage. As Dorothy Bernard said, "Courage is the fear that has said its prayer."
- It is not what was built and accumulated by you which matters. It is your capacity to build it again and again that matters. You still have it.
- Scriptures say 'What belongings did you have when you were born?' If there are losses, there will be gains as well.
- Probably you are losing a battle and not the war. And what even winning the war is?
- Does your persona need certificates from others?
- The wise men say, "Despite all its shame and drudgery, this is a wonderful world. You are a child of the universe. This is not a small status!"[254]

The above mentioned are my personal experiences, beliefs and synthesis and may not be taken as panacea, singly or totally, to reduce or alleviate stress. Nothing is promised.[255]

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254 Leuchtende Tage, nicht weinen, dass sie vorüber, sondern lächeln, dass sie gewesen.

Bright days, do not cry that they are gone by,
But still smile that they have been.
A German saying (After Confucius)

255 Kindly read the disclaimer.

18

OM/Praṇav[256]

Nothing of the *Vedānta*, and for that matter of Indian philosophy, could be complete without *Om*, also called *praṇav* - the word and sound. *Upaniṣads* are one of the three important scriptures of the *Vedānta*.[257] Many *Upaniṣads* such as *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (first section) and others describe *Om* and its importance. *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad*, in particular, describes *Om* exclusively. It consists of only 12 *mantras* and all these are devoted to describe *Om*.

Another important scripture available on *Om* is Gaudpādacārya's *Maṇḍūkya Kārikā*, also known as *Gaudpāda-Kārikā* or *Āgama Śāstra*. Gaudapāda (6th century A.D.) was the guru of Govindpādācārya[258] (who lived in 'Omkareshwara' near the present Indore in Central India) who was the guru of Ādi Śankaracārya (8th century A.D.). *Māṇḍūkya Karika* has four sections viz. *Āgama, Vaitathya, Advaita* and *Alātśānti*.[259] *Āgama Prakaraṇa* is, in fact, a commentary on all the 12 *mantras* of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* and consists of 29 *kārikās*.

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256 ॐ/प्रणव

257 *Upaniṣads, Brahma Sūtra* and *Bhagavad Gītā*, the three are collectively called as *Prasthāna Trayi*. Ādi Śankaracarya has written commentary on all the three.

258 चंद्रधर शर्मा, 1995. भारतीय दर्शन-आलोचन एवं अनुशीलन. मोतीलाल बनारसीदास पब्लिशर्स प्रा. लि., दिल्ली ।

259 चार प्रकरण: आगम, वैतथ्य, अद्वैत एवं अलातशांति ।

Let us see how *Om* is described in *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* and in *Āgama Prakaraṇa* of *Maṇḍūkya Kārikā*.

Omkāra is the *Brahm, Pranav* or the Supreme Element. It consists of three alphabets, 'a', 'u' and 'm' and one non-alphabet,[260] thus making it a total of four. *Omkāra* is synonymous with the *Brahm*. The *Brahm* is stated to have four legs or bases.[261]

The significance of these three alphabets (*OM/'AUM'*) is presented below in tabular form.

Alphabet[262]	**Meaning implied**	**Stage**	**Elements signifying**
'a'	Enormity/Omni-presence	Awake	External/Extrovert
'u'	Elevation	Dreaming	Internal/Introvert
'm'	Measuring ability	In deep sleep	Inner most

The first i.e. 'a' or *a-kāra* is present in every alphabet. It is omni-present and ubiquitous. Likewise, *Brahm* is present every

260 अ, उ, म् एवं अमात्र ।

261 ...ब्रह्म सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात ॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 2 ॥

जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञः स्थूलभुग्वैश्वानरः प्रथमः पादः ॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 3॥

स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तः प्रज्ञः प्रविविक्तभुक् तैजसो द्वितीयः पादः ॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 4 ॥

यत्र सुप्तो न कंचन कामं कामयते...एवानन्दमयो ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः ॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 5 ॥

262

वर्ण	इंगित अर्थ	अवस्था	ओम द्वारा प्रतिपाद्य आत्मतत्व		
			सामान्य	व्यष्टि	समष्टि
अकार	व्यापकता	जाग्रत	बहिष्प्रज्ञ	विश्व	वैश्वानर, विराट
उकार	उत्कर्ष/उध्र्व गमन	स्वप्न	अन्तःप्रज्ञ	तैजस	हिरण्यगर्भ
मकार	मापन—क्षमता	सुषुप्ति	घनप्रज्ञ	प्राज्ञ	परमात्मा, अंतर्यामी

ॐकार की चतुर्थ अर्ध--मात्रा में अंतर्यामी भाव का तुरीय ब्रह्म में लय होता है ।

where. Scriptures also say that *a-kāra* is everywhere.[263] At universal (*samashti*) level, the *a-kāra* or enormity means the universe and the u-kāra or elevation is *hiraṇyagarbha*. We have in the *Upaniṣads* the idea of *hiraṇyagarbha* or *Brahmā*, the word soul, that is said to be derived from the impersonal *Brahm*.[264]

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "I am *a-kāra* among the alphabets."[265] Thus, *a-kāra* represents the existence and magnanimity of the enormous universe[266] and one who understands it in this way,[267] attains all what he desires.

The second i.e. 'u' or *u-kāra* has an upward tendency and is elevated in nature and one who understands it in this way, elevates his knowledge and becomes one with the almighty.[268]

The third i.e. 'm' or *ma-kāra* represents a tendency to measure and absorb and one who understands it in this way, can measure the universe and its cause and absorb the whole in its essence.[269]

The fourth, i.e, non-alphabet, is the soul and is the same as the formless Supreme and one who understands it in this way, attains the stage in which his soul enters and emerges with the *Brahm*.[270]

The Supreme Element exists in the above three forms and is also beyond these in the fourth form, i.e. non-alphabet. In the

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263 'अकारो वै सर्वा वाक्' ॥ ऐतरेय आरण्यक, 2—3—6 ॥

264 Radhakrishnan 1923 (Indian Edition 1940, Tenth Impression, 1977). *Indian Philosophy – Volume* 2. Muirhead Library of Philosophy. Blackie & Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Pp. 1-807. (p.276 in particular).

265 'अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि' ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 10—33 ॥

266 जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरोऽकारः प्रथमा मात्रा.... ॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 9 ॥

267 स एवं वेद ।

268 स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो द्वितीया मात्रोत्कर्षादुभयत्वाद्वोत्कर्षति.... ॥
॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 10 ॥

269 सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रा....॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 11 ॥

270 अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपंचोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोंकार.... ॥
॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 12 ॥

latter form, it is conceived as the fourth (*turīya*) or non-alphabet form. This fourth form is pluralism-eradicator, calm and serene, all benefiting and symbol of non-duality.[271]

Several Upaniṣads and Brahman-scriptures have described the importance of Om. In Praśnopaniṣad, the fifth question by Satyakam and its answer by Pipplad is solely devoted to Om. It is stated that one who devotes through the one single alphabet of 'Om-kaar' goes to human birth ('Manushya Lok') through Rigved; one who devotes through two alphabets goes to space ('Chandra Lok/Antariksha') through Yajurved; and, one who devotes through three alphabets goes to the most divine sheath of *Brahm* ('Brahm Lok') through Samved.[272]

Most of the Vedic *Mantra* start with *'Om'*. The most significant among them are *Gāyatri Mantra*[273] and the Mahā *Mṛtyuñjaya Mantra* (*Ṛg Veda*, 7-59; *Yajur Veda*, 3-60).[274]

Putting it very simply, and not comprehensively, the *Gāyatri Mantra* wordily means:

Oh Brahm/God! The earth, space and heaven that are worth blessing by the Supreme/Sun; we concentrate on that godly virtue; let our intellect be guided by that essence.[275]

In *'Gāyatri Mantra,'* the prayer is that one should contemplate on the Supreme (the Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent) in order to attain purity of thoughts.

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271 प्रपंचोपशमं शांतं शिवमद्वैतं चतुर्थ मन्यते स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ॥

॥ माण्डूक्योपनिषद्, 7 ॥

272 ऋग्भुरेतं यजुर्भिरन्तरिक्षं सामभिर्यत् तत्कयो वेदयन्ते ।।

तमोकांरेणैवायतनेनान्वेति विद्वान् यत्तच्छान्तमजरममृतमभयं परं चेति ।।

।। प्रश्नोपनिषद्, पंचम प्रश्न, 7 ।।

273 ॐ भूर्भुवः म्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

274 ॐ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।

उर्वारूकमिव बन्धनान् मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥

275 सावित्र्युपनिषद् ।

The *Gāyatri Mantra* embodies the following meaning:

Oh God! You are life-creator, pain-eradicator and bliss-provider. May we imbibe Thy sin-destroying divine radiance? Let our intellect be led through by Thee, the Supreme.

The Maha *Mṛtyuñjaya* Mantra wordily means:

'Om. We worship The Three-Eyed Lord, Śiva who permeates like a fragrance and nourishes well all beings (the devotees). As the (ripe) cucumber is severed from bondage (to the creeper), may we be liberated from death for the sake of immortality.'

Here the death would mean both premature death in this physical world and the never ending cycle of deaths due to re-birth, delivery from which would lead to final emancipation for the sake of *Mokṣa*.

It states in *Gītā* (8-13) that one who takes the course of 'Om', attains the absolute status. One who leaves one's mortal body while intoning "OM' and through that remembering the Supreme (*Brahm*), attains the coveted status of liberation/salvation[276]. The '*śloka*' (8-13) stating this is also the first '*śloka*' of the seven most significant and prominent '*śloka*s' of *Gītā* i.e. "*Sapt Śloki Gītā*'. *Gītā* summarily states that *Om* is the truth that is unaffected by time, space and (the law of) causation. It states (17-23): *Om tat sat* means *Om* is the existent and eternal; *Om* is the truth. *Om, tat* and *sat* are the three which indicate the Supreme (*Brahm*), that created (i) the learned, (ii) the *Veda* (knowledge and wisdom; that which is worth knowing) and (iii) *yajña* (the ordained task and true action).[277]

276 ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 17-23 ॥

277 ॐ तत्सदितिनिर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्चयज्ञाश्च विहिताःपुरा ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 8—13 ॥

19

Salvation or *Mokṣa*

Salvation has been variously described in different religions and in different Indian orthodox and unorthodox schools. Even within *Vedānta*, the scriptures belonging to different sub-schools describe it more or less differently.

Salvation or *Mokṣa* has synonyms or near-synonyms such as *Nirvāṇa, Kaivalya, Mukti* etc. I shall use the word *mokṣa* in the following narration. *Mokṣa* or salvation is the highly evolved state which cannot be fully described. It is to be self-realised; it is *sva-anubhūtigamya* and *aparokṣānubhūtigamya*.[278] It is very difficult to describe the taste of sugar crystals (*miśri*) to someone who has not eaten it. The best way to make one understand this taste is to let him/her eat it. *Mokṣa,* likewise, is an intensely personal experience.

The Self (*Ātma*) and the Supreme (*Brahm*), the two elements, are often described in Indian philosophy in negative terms i.e. *na-eti* or *neti-neti*. It is not this, and not this also.[279] One may go to the extent of becoming a nihilist. It is, however, to be remembered that *neti-neti* negates the super-imposed characteristics/qualities of *Brahm* and not the *Brahm* itself. It proves the indescribability of *Brahm* and not the being of *Brahm*.[280] It is so-stated in order to understand. It tends to

278 स्वानुभूतिगम्य; अपरोक्षानुभूतिगम्य ।

279 स एव नेति नेति आत्मा ॥ बृहदारण्यक, 4—4—22 ॥

280 अनिर्वचनीयता एवं शून्यता में भेद है ।

describe the one who cannot be described. Literal meanings may confine the *Brahm* in the perception and not in the being.

Literally *Brahm* means the largest and yet ever enlarging, "that which contains all but is not contained by anything." Because of this, *Brahm* is taken to be as space. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya* and *Taittarīya Upaniṣads* indicate that *Brahm* is space or (*ākāśa*).[281] *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* states that *Brahm* is the inside of all and the outside of all. The *Brahm*, at best, can be felt and realised rather than be described. *Mokṣa* is the realisation of *Brahm*.

As also stated earlier, salvation can be brought about during one's lifetime and not necessarily after death. As stated in *Upaniṣads, Brahm* can be achieved here[282] on this earth and in this birth.

There are several views and connotations applied to the salvation. According to Jain and Budhhist religion, *mokṣa* is *kaivalya* and/or *nirvāṇa*. According to *Sānkhya, mokṣa* (*kaivalya* or *apvarga*) is the only end of (or freedom from) pains. It believes that *mokṣa* is beyond 'pain' or 'pleasure' and no state of bliss can, therefore, be associated with it. *Vedānta*, on the other hand, regards it as a state of pure existence (*sat*), pure knowledge (*cit*) and pure bliss (*ānanda*) i.e. *satcidānanda*[283] which is reached after attaining freedom from nescience.

Ādi Śankāracārya has stated three characteristics[284] of mokṣa.

1. *Mokṣa* is being free from nescience,
2. *Mokṣa* is feeling and being *Brahm*, and
3. *Mokṣa* is a state of perpetual bodilessness.

Let us see how *mokṣa* and some of its major characteristics are described in scriptures.

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281 *Kham Brahm; ākaśo eva nāma Brahm.*

282 इहैव तदाप्नोति; अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ।

283 सत्, चित्, आनंदः सच्चिदानंद ।

284 अविद्यानिवृत्तिरेव मोक्षः ब्रह्मभावश्च मोक्षः नित्यमशरीरत्वं मोक्षः ।

19.1 *Mokṣa* is *kaivalya*

According to Jain religion, *mokṣa* or *kaivalya* is the cessation or annihilation of deeds and action.[285] It states in the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* (10.1-2): "Perfect knowledge is attained on the destruction of deluding actions which obscure knowledge and perception, and of actions which obstruct (faith). With the absence of the causes of bondage, the annihilation of all actions i.e. liberation is reached."

Jīva, in its original state, is free from bondage. Bondage comes due to falsehood,[286] absence of detachment[287] and other elements.[288,289]

Right faith, right and true knowledge and right conduct are the paths leading to salvation.[290] Right conduct consists of following restraints or *Yamas* viz. (i) *Ahimsā* or non-violence, (ii) *Satyam* or truthfulness, (iii) *Brahmacarya* or moderation in all things (control of all senses) and celibacy, (iv) *Asteya* or non-stealing, and (v) *Aparigraha* or non-covetousness.[291]

There are 14 stages[292] spanning from the first stage of falsehood followed by the second stage of element-discrimination and finally leading to the thirteenth stage i.e. near salvation and the last i.e. the fourteenth stage or salvation. While

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285 कृत्स्नकर्मक्षयो मोक्षः ॥ तत्त्वार्थसूत्र, 8.1 ॥

286 मिथ्यात्व, सदसद्विवेक शून्यता ।

287 अविरति, रागादि ।

288 प्रमाद, कषाय अर्थात् लोभ, मान, माया एवं योग ।

289 सकषायत्वात् जीवः कर्मणो योग्यान् पुद्गलान् आछत्ते । स बन्धुः ।

॥ तत्त्वार्थसूत्र, 8.2—3 ॥

290 सम्यक दर्शन, सम्यक ज्ञान एवं सम्यक चारित्र ।

सम्यग्दर्शनज्ञानचारित्राणि मोक्षमार्गः ॥ तत्त्वार्थसूत्र, 1.1 ॥

291 सम्यक चारित्र अर्थात् अहिंसा, सत्य, अस्तेय, ब्रह्मचर्य एवं अपरिग्रह ।

292 14 गुण—स्थानः प्रथम—मिथ्यात्व/अविवेक; द्वितीय—ग्रन्थि भेद/सदसद्विवेकोदय; तेरहवां—सयोग केवल/जीवनमुक्ति सदृश; चौदहवां एवं अंतिम—अयोग केवल/विदेहमुक्ति सदृश । तत्पश्चात् सिद्धशिला ।

alive, one can attain upto the thirteenth stage because on attaining the fourteenth stage, the body is also abandoned (resulting in cessation of mortal being). The free element, then, goes to *Siddha Śila*, the pure and pious place. There it gets centred in its essence and reaches the state of eternal bliss.

19.2 *Mokṣa* is *nirvāna*

Nirvāṇa literally means blowing out (the candle). The Buddha emphasises on extinguishing the desire, which primarily causes misery to human beings. He said, "Your so-called self is nothing but a flame. It is burning through your desires. When all desires disappear, the flame disappears. It cannot exist anymore. The flame disappears into the vast universe." Thus, *nirvāṇa* would mean reaching a stage of 'desirelessness.'

The word *nirvāṇa*, having a sense of negation, saves one from being egoistic as the word liberation can give a sense of superiority. Thus, *nirvāṇa* also includes 'egolessness.'

19.3 *Mokṣa* is being free from nescience[293]

Let us make an attempt to understand how freedom from nescience takes to salvation. Several forms of nescience and paths to eradicate them are given in the scriptures. According to my little understanding, I shall attempt to present it but it may well be a partial and bigoted view only.

There are three main forms of nescience viz., (i) dirt/refuse/waste, (ii) mental imbalance/insanity, and (iii) shell/cover.[294] The dirt is washed away by non-attached action. Mental imbalance is corrected by devotion. The shell or cover is removed by knowledge of essence. The non-reality or *Māyā*[295] is that reality-like appearance which actually is not there. *Māyā* literally means that which is not existing. It keeps one mired in ignorance. The Spirit is obscured by the veil of plurality. There is a difference of

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293 अविद्यानिवृत्तिरेव मोक्षः ।

294 मल, विक्षेप/चित्त चांचल्य, एवं आवरण ।

295 मा या; That which is not.

opinion within the *Vedānta* regarding the relation of nescience and non-reality or *māyā*. Some believe that nescience and non-reality are one and the same things. Others believe that shell/cover is nescience whereas mental imbalance is non-reality or *māyā*.

The three forms of nescience and ways of their eradication are depicted in tabular form as given below:

Forms of nescience[296]	Path of eradicating nescience	Resultant State	The final consequence
Dirt	Action	To heaven through misty way	Re-birth on cessation of the virtue that emanated from righteous deeds.
Mental imbalance	Devoutness	To the land of coveted/ worshipped god through devotion	To be (i) in the land of, (ii) in close proximity of, (iii) in the same form as that of, and (iv) be one and unified with, the coveted/ worshipped god.
Shell/cover	Knowledge of essence	Liberated status	Liberation/salvation, no rebirth, the self and soul absorbed in their essence.

Source: *Muktikopaniṣad* and *Gītā* (8-24, 25, 26)

19.4 *Mokṣa* is a state of perpetual bodilessness[297]

Death is the ultimate pointer to the transience of all mortal things. Death is the ultimate end of the mortal components of the

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अविद्या के रुप	निराकरण का मार्ग	गति	अंतिम परिणिति
मल	कर्म	धूममार्ग से स्वर्ग लोक	पुण्य क्षीण होने पर पुनः जन्म
विक्षेप/चित्त चांचल्य	उपासना	अर्चिरादि मार्ग से उपास्य लोक	सालोक्य, सामीप्य, सारुप्य, सायुज्य मुक्ति
आवरण	तत्व ज्ञान	कैवल्य पद	कैवल्य मुक्ति/विदेह मुक्ति, प्राणों का उत्क्रमण नहीं, लोकांतरगमन नहीं, शरीर अपने-अपने तत्वों में लीन

मुक्तिकोपनिषद् एवं गीता 8—24, 25, 26.

297 नित्यमशरीरत्वं मोक्षः ।

living beings. Mortal components are not durable. Those do not last long. It is only rational to realise this as early as possible. Once this is done, one has learnt to die before the actual death. It is a great experience. Then you do not possess the mortal part of your being. Then you have moved towards a state of perpetual bodilessness. This is liberation. Saint Paul says, "I die everyday." Muslim saints call it *Mūtū kablant mūtū*[298] i.e. "dying before dying." The perpetual bodilessness or formlessness or 'dying every day' is having *Mokṣa*.

19.5 Is *Mokṣa,* a reality if bondage or nescience is an unreality?

There is an interesting argument. Bondage and *mokṣa* both are apparent due to nescience. When bondage is not real, how *mokṣa* can be real? It is to be noted that there are several schools/views within the *Vedānta* philosophy itself and several questions have been raised in regard to non-dualism. For example, the followers of Madhava believe in dualism. Rāmānujacārya propounded *Viśiṣṭa-advaita* and questioned non-dualism (of Ādi Śankaracārya) through his famous seven erudite and logical arguments (*anupapatti*). Let us see that if nescience is not real how freedom from nescience can be real?

The answer is that *Jīva* is *Jīva* because of nescience. Through *ātma jñāna,* the nescience is shed-off and Jīva attains the state of *Brahm*. In this state, the individual *Jīva* merges with the absolute total infinite Self, transcending all concepts of time, space and causation, ever revelling in the non-dual state of pure existence, pure knowledge and pure bliss.[299] This is a freedom from bondage of *māyā*/nescience.

In this context, it is interesting to see what the west think of truth and reality. We shall mostly discuss Bradley's views as expressed in the '*Appearance and Reality*.'[300] Ordinarily, truth is a

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298 मूतू कबलन्त मूतू ।

299 सत, चित, आनंदः सच्चिदानंद

300 Francis Herbert Bradley. 1959 Impression (Based on Second Edition, 1897), *Appearance and Reality*. Clarendon Press, London.

characteristic of propositions, and, logically once a proposition is true, it remains so timelessly. As stated above, the Hinduism believes that the truth could be visualised from either relative or transcendental point of view. Likewise, Bradley maintains that 'there will be no truth which is entirely true, just as there will be no error which is totally false.' Obviously, here he is talking of truth as seen in this world by us. No appearance is all-inclusive but some is relatively more inclusive than others. Appearances and reality are intimately related, in spite of the difficulty of understanding this relation. Moore and Russell (who were once pupils of Bradley) favour pluralism of facts of daily life and speak of *external* relation between facts. Bradley rejects both external and internal relations, since the Absolute Reality is super-relational. The immediate experiences of the human beings are source of the knowledge of the Absolute Reality and are the starting point for self-realisation.

Common sense is not wrong in accepting the plurality of facts in daily life. Chairs and tables and all the furnitures of the earth are really appearances of Reality. As appearances, things of daily life are not unreal as sky-flowers (*kha-puṣpa*), but they are only partially true. Reality is unintelligible without appearances. So appearances do belong to Reality. Only appearances are higher and lower. There are degrees of Reality in appearances.

Kant also says that knowledge of phenomena alone is possible; *noumena* or the things-in-themselves remain unknown and unknowable. Objects of knowledge are transfigured and transformed by *a priori* forms of human knowing. Kant maintains that we can know objects only as they appear to us, coloured and transformed by our ways of knowing.

This 'appearance' is what Ādi Śankaracarya, long ago, called as observations due to super-imposition (*adhyāsa*) and nescience (*avidyā*).

In conclusion, bondage and *mokṣa* both are so only from the relative point of view and are, in fact, untrue from transcendental

point of view.[301] From relative viewpoint, there is a curtain of nescience between the Supreme and us. From transcendental viewpoint, there is no curtain of nescience between the Supreme and us. The curtain is seen only owing to our presumed relationship with the inert; it is due to nescience. Otherwise, we are the Supreme.

19.6 Salvation does not come about; it is always there

From the above discussion, it is evident that liberation/salvation does not come about; it is always there. It, however, has to be revealed in its form. Only eradication of nescience and error is needed to realise it. It states in *Gītā*: "That which comes about, goes away. That which is always there, never goes away. So, it is there; it does not come about."[302]

Actually, in *mokṣa*, the *Jīva* does not turn into *Brahm* or does not become *Brahm*. There is no action/reaction or process in *Brahm jñāna* because *Jīva* is always *Brahm*. Freedom from both nescience and also accumulated past deeds is needed for *mokṣa*.

Mokṣa is not something to be attained. It is the most natural state. It is a state to be experienced. *Mokṣa* is there. It, however, has to be realised. The nescience and impositions, which have covered and shaded it, are to be removed. *Brahm* is always there.

Even after freedom from nescience (*avidyā nāśa*), the *Jīva* continues to live till the past-accumulated deeds are not over. The traditional Indian way of pot-making uses a wheel; when wheel is rotating with full speed, it keeps on rotating for some time even when the potter has taken his hand off the wheel. The *Jīva* continues to live for some time even after liberation till the effect of deeds is not completely over.

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301 व्यावहारिक एवं पारमार्थिक सत् ।

302 नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 11—16 ॥

19.7 Transcending *Mokṣa*

Can we transcend even the desire for *mokṣa* when we have not attained it? Moreover, once *mokṣa* has been achieved, can we seek *mokṣa* from *mokṣa* (liberation from liberation)? The answer is 'No' because that would be a contradiction. *Mokṣa* signals not merely the end of suffering. In Hinduism, particularly in *Vedānta, mokṣa* refers to simultaneous(i) end of suffering, and(ii) the experience of bliss. As stated earlier, it is a state of pure existence (*sat*), pure knowledge (*cit*) and pure bliss (*ānanda*) i.e. *satcidānanda.*[303] It is the ultimate state.

19.8 The reality – The *Brahm*

With the understanding of nescience,[304] let us see what is meant by the Reality. The scriptures say that the *Brahm* is the reality[305] (*Brahm satyam jagan mithya; Jīvo Brahmaiva nāparaḥ*). *Brahm* is the truth; the world is unreal (*māyā*); the individual soul (*Jīva*) is *Brahm;* no other (not different).

Ādi Śankarācārya states:[306] *Mokṣa* is transcendental truth, omnipresent as sky, devoid of all abnormalities, always satiated, by nature shining in its own light, cannot be touched by good or bad deeds and is above the death (and time); such a bodilessness (formlessness) is the *mokṣa.*

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303 सत्, चित्, आनंदः सच्चिदानदं ।

304 अविद्या, अध्यास एवं विवर्त

305 ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन् मिथ्या; जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।

306 इदं तु पारमार्थिक, कूटस्थनित्यं, व्योमवत् सर्वव्यापि,
सर्वविक्रियारहितं, नित्यतृप्तं, विरवयव, स्वयंज्योतिःस्वभावम्,
यत्र धर्माधर्मौ सह कार्येण, कालत्रयं च, नोपावर्तें ते,
तदेतत् अशरीरत्वं मोक्षाख्यं ॥ शा. भा., 1.1.4. ॥

20

The Four Great Vedic Statements

The four great statements, *mahāvākyas* of the *Vedas*/*Upaniṣads*, as given below,[307] bring about the fact of non-duality with the *Brahm*, the Supreme.

- True knowledge is *Brahm* (*Prajñānam Brahm; Śuka Rahasyopaniṣad*, 2/1).
- That Thou Art (*Tat tvam asi; Chāndogyopaniṣad*, 6/8/7, 6/9/4, 6/14/3).
- One's own essence or soul is *Brahm* (*Ayam Ātma Brahm; Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 2/6/19; *Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad*, 2).
- I am *Brahm* (*Aham Brahm Asmi; Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1/4/10).

20.1 True knowledge is *Brahm* (*Prajñānam Brahm*)

The statement proclaims that true knowledge (*prajña*) is *Brahm*. Knowledge, as commonly understood, is not considered greater than wisdom. In philosophy, wisdom is greater than knowledge. An unwise or not so wise person can also accumulate some knowledge but the level of such knowledge will be low. Most of

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307 महावाक्यः

- प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म । (शुकरहस्योपनिषद्, 2/1)
- तत् त्वं असि (तत्त्वमसि) । ;छान्दोग्योपनिषद्, 6/8/7, 6/9/4, 6/14/3).
- अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म अस्मि । (बृहदारण्यक, 2/6/19; माण्डूक्य, 2)
- अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि । (बृहदारण्यक, 1/4/10)

the persons have the type of knowledge which only makes them earn their bread.[308] It does not go beyond that. The true and discriminative knowledge[309] is attained through wisdom only and is different from what is commonly understood by knowledge. Such true and discriminative knowledge only could lead to the realisation of *Brahm*.

20.2 'That thou art' (*Tat tvam asi*)

'You are that Supreme.' There is no difference between the two. In *Chāndogyopaniṣad* (6/8/7), it is stated that 'the truth is that thou art that soul/*Brahm*.[310] In Ādi Śankarācārya's *Viveka Cūḍāmaṇi*, every *śloka* from 254 to 264 contains this *Chāndogya Mahāvākya*, 'That Thou Art.'

A fable of ten ignorants/dunces is related to the realisation of 'That Thou Art.' Ten unwise persons crossed a small river while holding hands of one another so that they are not swept-off or drowned. On reaching the bank at the other side, they started counting themselves. Every body, who attempted counting, could count only nine because every time the unwise person who was counting did not count himself. They, then, started weeping and crying that they had lost one of them in the river. A wise man happened to come around and told them that there is nothing to worry because they are ten. They did not believe this and wanted to know who the tenth (supposedly the lost) one was. The wise man, then, started counting them and when he came to the tenth person he patted him and told him 'you are the tenth.'[311] That tenth person then realised that he himself is actually the tenth man who had forgotten to count himself. Similarly, we have to remember 'That Thou Art.'

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308 पेट पालने की विद्या

309 प्रज्ञा, विवेक, सम्यक ज्ञान

310 तत् सत्यं स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि ॥ छान्दोग्योपनिषद्, 6/8/7 ॥

311 त्वमेव दशमौसि ।

20.3 One's own essence or soul is *Brahm* (*Ayam Ātma Brahm*)

The (this) soul (*ātmā*) is the Supreme or *Brahm*. One has to realise one's own essence or soul. If that is done, one is free from bondage. For *mokṣa*, the truth has to be dawned that the Soul and the Supreme (*Brahm* and *ātma*) are one and the same.[312] This truth has no alternative. This realisation is the key for salvation. This realisation transcends all schools of philosophy. Śankaracharya states, "*Mokṣa* is attained by realising that the Soul and the Supreme are one and the same."[313]

Chāndogyopaniṣad also says that you are that soul which is *Brahm*.

Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Gītā*; "I (the Supreme) am the Soul."[314]

The corollary is that the Soul is the Supreme. The Soul is the *Brahm*.

20.4 I am the Supreme; I am *Brahm* (*Aham Brahm Asmi*)

The journey is from self-introspection to self-realisation. The journey is from "Who am I?" (*ko aham*) to "So am I" (*so aham*).[315] Ultimately, it is realised that "I am Him" and, thus, "I am the Supreme."

Śankaracharya states "Who am I"?; "From where I have come?"[316] As stated earlier, *ko aham* is the process through which one reaches the target-stage that is *so aham*. It leads to the understanding and realising that there is an over-ruling all-

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312 ब्रह्म एवं आत्मा के एकत्व का बोध अर्थात् 'ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोध'।

313 न योगेन न सांख्येन कर्मणा नो न विद्यया।
ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधेन मोक्षः सिद्धयति नान्यथा ॥ विवेक चूड़ामणि, 58 ॥

314 अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशय स्थितः।
अहमादिश्च मध्य च भूतनामन्त एव च ॥

315 कोऽहं से सोऽहं तक।

316 कत्स्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः--आदिशंकराचार्य।

engrossing power and I am part of it. In fact, I am it: *so aham*. I am the *Brahm*. I am the Supreme.

When the guidance or preaching of scriptures in the form of 'That Thou Art' is converted into self-realisation i.e. 'I am the Supreme,'[317] the salvation or *mokṣa* is attained.

317 तत् त्वं असि' से 'अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि की ओर।

21

Let the Ascent Commence

I expect and also trust and believe that if we introspect in view of the above narration, we may find our real state and the category to which we presently belong. Ascent of the self may, then, commence to transform a human being into a divine being.

We must accept our present state in all humility and start evolving, no matter how low we are at present. We should not bother as to whether or not liberation will be possible in this birth. Getting started and maintaining the ascent, even with a slow pace and diffused direction, will at least immediately check the downfall. One will at least attain somewhat an elevated form, which will be a good base for further improvement.

In essence, the stages and desiderata may be broadly as follows although the specificities within them may vary from individual to individual.

1. Birth with initial capital as per the history of evolution or past deeds.[318]
2. Exposure to the world, learning/education.[319]
3. Means of living [320] (for food, clothing, shelter etc.).

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318 प्रारब्धकर्म अनुसार जन्म

319 जगत से परिचय, शिक्षा

320 जीवन निर्वाह हेतु जीविका वृत्ति

4. Keeping oneself engaged in prescribed and designated action to carry out worldly responsibilities, as far as possible.[321]
5. Realisation of one's own stage and selection of the path of self-realisation accordingly.[322]
6. Action and worship (including yoga and *yajña*) for purity of thoughts along with good and righteous company and self-study[323] for performing true action in a non-attached manner towards bringing an end to the causes of desires.[324]
7. Moving from relative to transcendental plane; physical to mental and social being, mental and social to intellectual being, intellectual to spiritual and universal being.
8. Starting from simple prayer and moving towards chanting, meditation and deep meditation consisting of conscious and unconscious meditation.[325]
9. Adopting the four-fold *Sādhana Chatustaya* for freedom from bondage.[326]
10. Secluded existence and keeping silence as feasible.[327]
11. *Brahm-Bhāva;* to be in living state as long as the past-accumulated deeds are not over.[328]

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321 सांसारिक दायित्वों एवं सहज/नियत कर्मों का यथासंभव निर्लिप्त रुप से निर्वाह।

322 अपनी प्रारब्धिक स्थिति का आकलन एवं तदनुसार परमार्थ मार्ग का चयन—सगुण अथवा निर्गुण ब्रह्म।

323 चित्त शुद्धि हेतु कर्म एवं उपासना; योग, सतसंग एवं स्वाध्याय।

324 भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 8—3 ॥

325 प्रार्थना से जप, ध्यान एवं समाधि (संप्रज्ञात एवं उपायप्रत्यय असंप्रज्ञात समाधि, कैवल्य समाधि) की ओर,

326 बंधन—मुक्ति हेतु साधन—चतुष्टय अर्थात् विवेक, वैराग्य, षट्—संपत्ति (सम, दम, उपरति, तितिक्षा, श्रद्धा एवं समाधान) एवं मुमुक्षुत्व से सुसज्जित होना,

327 यथाशक्ति/यथासंभव बर्हिनिरोध, वाक्—निरोध, एकांतवास

12. The ultimate end of the mortal components of the living being.

(Sense of all terms mentioned above is relative to start with and absolute to end with.)

The above is easier said than done. It may take several years (and even several births?) to reach some of the stages. The stages 10 and 11 are actually stages of liberation and salvation and are attained by very few human beings. However, the quest must be there.

Arise, awake and gain knowledge by going to the learned elders. This path is as difficult and sharp as the sharpness of an iron blade/sword, as the wise men say.[329]

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328 ब्रह्म—भाव, प्रारब्ध—कर्म के क्षय होने तक ब्रह्म—भाव में लीन रहना; देह—त्याग

329 उत्तिष्ठ, जाग्रत, प्राप्य वरान्नि बोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्ग पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति ॥
॥कठोपनिषद्, प्रथम अध्याय, तृतीय वल्ली, 14 ॥

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